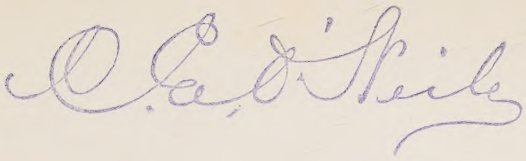

THE ANCIENT FAITH IN MODERN LIGHT

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THE ANCIENT FAITH IN MODERN LIGHT

A SERIES OF ESSAYS

BY

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PREFACE

THE following Essays, by members of a society of ministers accustomed to meet for free and brotherly conference, are intended to reassert, from a modern point of view, great fundamental verities of the Christian Faith, and to indicate some of their varied applications.

To distinguish between the permanent and the transient in Religion is one of the gravest and hardest tasks of the theologian. In every age there is a "removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may remain." Too often, indeed, in the eager desire for progress, the distinction is missed; and in the criticism of human theories and systems the Divine thought that underlies them is left out of sight. To avoid this error has been the great aim of the Essayists, whose long experience as Christian teachers, with much close observation of the thoughts and tendencies of the time, has led them to cling with ever-increasing confidence to the truths which are unchanging and essential.

No complete survey of theological truth has been attempted; nor has it lain within the writers' scope to discuss those forms of modern criticism which are thought

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by some to have weakened the very foundations of the Ancient Faith. Considerable light, it is gratefully acknowledged, has been thrown, in the course of such criticism, on the Sacred Records; while there has undoubtedly been much that is conjectural and extravagant, and is already proving to be ephemeral. But, apart from all this, there are grounds of sure belief on which the Christian apologist may rest, changing, it may be, in some respects his line of defence, but confident in the ever-abiding Truth.

Considerable space has been devoted in this volume to the practical applications of Christianity in social, domestic, and public life. These also are of growing importance. On the philosophic side, it is more than ever needful to show the connection of the Ancient Faith with all that is sound and true in modern psychology and ethics; and amid the pressing questions of our day, going down to the very roots of the social order, all who can set forth the influence of Theology on human affairs, and vindicate the place of Christian teaching among the forces which regulate Society, will render valuable service alike to the Churches and the People.

The several writers, although thus actuated by a common purpose, and in full agreement regarding essential truth, are in details independent of one another. No one, save the Editor, has seen, prior to publication, any Essay but his own; and no editorial alterations whatever have been made. Each writer has no doubt given utterance to views which others would have expressed differently, or from which they might dissent; but it was thought that the end in view would best be served by leaving the entire responsibility of the Essays with their several authors.

The Essay, or Fragment, placed at the end of the volume requires no apology for its incompleteness. Its author, the beloved and lamented HENRY ROBERT REYNOLDS, was the friend of all who have co-operated in this volume, and was for some years a member of their society. He took the keenest interest in the project; and one of his last works on earth was to lay the foundation, in this paper, of an extended Essay on the Personality and Work of the Holy Spirit. His associates are grateful for the permission to lay before the readers of this volume these latest fruits of so richly endowed a mind, and so beautiful and devoted a life.

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Principal of Rawdon College, Leeds

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to pronounce against the possibility or probability of their existence as travelling servants of Omnipotence. A distinguished savant has argued with much force that their hypothetical acceptance would fill a great gap in his scientific theory of the universe. Even the doctrine of evolution favours the probability that such beings will hereafter be evolved, if they have not already been produced. I am not anxious, however, to vindicate the Hebrew belief, and only wish at present to note its theological significance, as offering a partial explanation of divine revelation to men; and even this I refer to mainly in order to point out how very partial is the explanation it supplies.

Closely examined, the so-called Theophanies of the Old Testament seem reducible to divine appearances only in a representative sense. *E.g.* one of Abraham's three mysterious visitants is spoken of in the same narrative as a man and as an angel, and yet again is identified with God, and speaks with divine authority to the patriarch.[1] These are either absurd discrepancies which stamp the author as below the intellectual level of an Arabian story-teller, or they prove that the narrator meant to indicate an angelic being who at least for the occasion wore a manlike form, and who spoke with authority as the plenipotentiary of God. This was the interpretation adopted by all those among the later Rabbins who did not, like Philo, refine the historical narrative into an allegory. Their elaborated angelology was puerile and preposterous; but they were acute critics, and were not without scriptural data for their belief that there is one highest creature, fitly called "the Angel of the Face," because allowed an altogether unique privilege of access to God's presence. They also held that this representative was always present as an intermediary whenever God was said to have appeared to men.

The most significant passages in support of this view

[1] Gen. xviii. 2, 16, 23, 26, xix. 1, 29.

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London

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By R. Vaughan Pryce, M.A., LL.B.
Principal of New College, London

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By Samuel Newth, M.A., D.D.

Late Principal of New College, London

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By Joseph Parker, D.D.
Minister of the City Temple, London

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Minister of the Baptist Church, Hampstead

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By J. Guinness Rogers, B.A., D.D.
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APPENDIX

THE WITNESS TO THE SPIRIT

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ite for the Divine Cause, it must from the nature of the case be already there, *i.e.* be self-existent with Him."[1] This sentence was written when Dr. Martineau was contemplating "matter" and "space" as the only discoverable *data* for choice, but it is quite as axiomatic if for matter we substitute "manlike" persons. If they are the necessary conditions of God's Personality, they must "be self-existent with Him," and He is no more their Creator than they collectively are His. It thus appears that Dr. Martineau is impaled on the horns of a dilemma, either of which is fatal to his theory. If God actually created all finite persons, it must be conceded that some uncreated "other-than-self" existed with God, or within God's personal fulness of being, as the indispensable condition of His own causality. If, on the other hand, God did not create all finite persons, He is not the First Cause of the universe, and Theism disappears. Where Dr. Martineau has thus failed it is unlikely that any living or coming philosopher will succeed. He has failed where Plato and Aristotle and Zeno failed, and where all the trained hosts of metaphysicians have failed for centuries. He has had the vain attempts of the past before him, and, confessing their failure, has laboured hard and skilfully to supply what was lacking in them, and to avoid their defects, while still persistently refusing to acknowledge the value even to philosophy of that Eternal Self-expression which the inspired fisherman of Galilee described as the Word. The outcome of his labour is that he has virtually demonstrated the impossibility of the Unitarian position. His arguments to show that the First Cause must be One and Personal are admirable; but his attempt to render such a Being conceivable breaks down. Hence it is not unreasonable to affirm, that if God is to be revered by philosophic minds as the Creator of the Cosmos and of man; if we are not to reel back into the insensate folly of a materialistic evolution

[1] *Study of Religion*, vol. i. p. 381, 2nd ed.

I

CHRISTIAN THEISM

By T. VINCENT TYMMS

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I

Christian Theism

I

Christian Theism differs fundamentally from all other forms of Theistic Theory or Faith. It is not merely Theism as interpreted by Christ's teachings; nor is it Theism with Christ added to the God whom non-Christians worship. It is a faith which cherishes an idea of God to which not only Christ's words but His personality have contributed elements which in the estimation of Christian thinkers render Theism more satisfying, both to the intellect and to the heart.

To many, Christianity appears to be, not an enrichment, but a corruption of Theism. Modern Jews are inclined to claim Christ as a national prophet, and some revere Him as the crowning glory of Israel; but they abhor His worship as idolatry, and cleave to their own ancient religion as the only historical exponent of Monotheism, and one which they exult in as divinely predestined to be the conquering creed of the world.

There are other Theists who reject Judaism as an historical religion, because in their judgment its great truths are mixed up with national prejudices and idle traditions and myths; but after eliminating these elements, they agree with Jews in their belief in a personal God, and in their refusal to regard Christ as more than a man of prophetic genius, and the heroic founder of a sect which has chiefly erred in exalting Him to a seat on the throne of God.

An adequate treatment of the theme thus presented

would involve a comparative study of all Theistic Theories, but such a gigantic task immeasurably exceeds the compass of an Essay. My less ambitious effort must be to exhibit some of the more salient points of agreement and of difference between Old Testament and New Testament Theism; and to point out the higher beauty and reasonableness of Christian Theism, and its greater credibility in the searching light of modern philosophy.

II

1. In attempting this task it becomes necessary to state what we understand to be the Old Testament idea of God. At the outset a grave difficulty looms threateningly across our path. We are assured with no small claims to authority that the Old Testament contains no single and persistent doctrine of God. Happily, however, we are not obliged to discuss the question thus raised. It is one of extreme interest, and deserves all the labour and time which modern scholarship is expending upon it. The antiquity of ethical Monotheism, and its true relation to the Henotheism and Polytheism which undoubtedly prevailed among the Hebrew people before their Eastern captivity, must be decided on critical grounds; but the decision has no effect on my present purpose, which is, not to trace the history of ethical Monotheism to its source, but to compare it in its highest and purest form with Christianity, which I regard as its consummation and crown. Without prejudice, therefore, to any critical opinions respecting the authorship, date, or inspiration of our documentary sources, we may range over the whole area of Hebrew literature, and, taking the highest thoughts of God we can discover, may say, "Here is Hebrew Theism. This is the religion which Christ found at His coming, and on which He exerted so stupendous an influence, that He turned it from a national cultus into a religion which has

its disciples in every race; and has translated the oracles of Israel into almost every language spoken among men."[1]

2. The primary thought of Hebrew Theism is that God is the sole author of the Cosmos; and it is this which constitutes it a true Monotheism. Henotheism permits the worship of only one national God, but it does not deny that there may be other gods to whom foreigners owe equal fealty. It has not reached the conception of a cosmos or universal order, and consequently does not gather up all causality and authority into one sole God. By a severe, and perhaps unwarranted, treatment of language, Henotheism may be attributed to some of the writers of the Old Testament; and without question multitudes of Israelites failed to attain a broader faith; while in the face of the clearest teaching, multitudes sank into the meanest idolatry, and deserved the scathing contempt of the prophets as worshippers of many despicable deities. But for centuries before the coming of Christ the conception of a divinely-ordered cosmos was clearly a ruling idea among thinking Hebrews, and it finds frequent and sublime expression in their writings.

Whatever its age, the opening chapter of Genesis exhibits the logical basis of this Monotheism. "In the beginning God made the heavens and the earth." Neither here nor elsewhere is there any trace of a reasoned theory of Unity such as we find in early Greek speculation. The writer has not groped his way from the Many to the One; and his language is neither scientific nor philosophical. He gives us a faith, not a theory; nor an account of facts ascertained by search and set in order by reflection on their significance. His aim is distinctly theological and his style poetic. He boldly describes the process of creation as one before whose eyes the slow development of ages passed in vision. His composition has the sublime simplicity of a mind which beholds God's work with childlike wonder, rather than the

[1] Cf. Note A, p. 58.

speculative audacity of a philosopher who presumes to explain the universe to his fellows. He writes for men and women who have looked on the sun and moon and stars, on the sea and on the dry land, and have marvelled at the riches of life in air and earth and water; who have also looked within, and been awed by the mystery of conscious being, each individual life gliding from an unremembered source towards an unforeseen bourne,—a trembling traveller on a road hidden before and behind by darkling mist. Whence came I and my fathers? Whence came this world and all its marvels? To these inquiries the answer of the poetic seer is summed up in one word—"God."

This cosmogony is specially significant for the student of Hebrew Theism, because of the place in nature to which it assigns man, and the basis it provides for personal and therefore ethical relations between God and man. It offers no account of God's nature and attributes, but it represents Him as a Person who first conceives an ideal Cosmos, and then by an effortless volition calls its material counterpart into existence. "God said," implies the existence of an Eternal Mind which is not imprisoned in itself like the God of Aristotle, but active because living, rich in thought as the universe is rich in its realised expressions, and also capable of effecting wise designs without work or handicraft, but simply by the energy of will as betokened by the human analogy of a spoken command. Everything which is expanded in the beautiful poem in praise of "Wisdom" in Prov. viii. lies implicitly in Gen. i., and the whole history of ethical religion has a worthy basis in the declaration that man was made in the "image" and "after the likeness" of this personal God.

If we ask what the writer meant by these words "image" and "likeness," it becomes clear that they are not intended to convey the gross idea that God wears a shape of which man's body is an imitation. The word "likeness" seems to

have been added to obviate a materialistic interpretation of "image"; and the definition of man's business in life as the acquisition of dominion over the earth, with all its living occupants, makes it plain that intelligent lordship is the chief point of resemblance between man and his Maker.

If this interpretation required support it might be found in the following chapter, which contains a second account of man's creation. This is commonly accepted as more ancient, and more strongly anthropomorphic than the former; but while using vividly picturesque language, it draws a marked distinction between the human body which was formed of the dust, or material substance of the soil, and the "life" breathed into it by God. Thus both narratives represent man as in some unique sense a partaker of the divine nature. He is a member of the physical cosmos, and is of the earth earthy, and destined to return to the dust whence he was taken and by whose products he is nourished; but he has also received an effluence from God, and is akin to Him in a sense which is true of no other creature upon the earth. Like God, he has a mind which can think, and can express his thoughts in words and actions. He can therefore hold intercourse with his Maker, if He will condescend to communicate with His offspring in ways adapted to their faculties. He can converse with his fellows, thought answering to thought; and this converse in which he reveals himself, and receives a revelation from others, indicates at least the possibility of that rational intercourse with the Creator which is the essential condition of religion as understood by Christian Theism.

3. This brings before us a second but equally fundamental characteristic of Hebrew Theism, viz., that it was essentially anthropomorphic. It is a strange mistake to suppose that this is a time-mark, peculiar to an early stage of religious thought and literary expression. I have declined to discuss the chronology of the Hebrew Scriptures; but without break-

ing this self-imposed rule am free, and indeed obliged, to offer one observation by way of calling attention to an indisputable truism. No analysis of documents and no theories of compilation will avail to relieve late writers from the reproach of anthropomorphism at the expense of less cultured predecessors. Criticism may, and no doubt does, discover evidences of late editorial work, but it cannot reverse the process and throw back a more modern author's faults on an old-fashioned but long deceased reviser! But those vivid pictorial phrases which are found in the most antique portions of Genesis may be matched, not only in the latest canonical books of the Old Testament, but in those of a much more recent date, *e.g.* "The Book of Wisdom," which was written in Greek, and is one of the most philosophical and Hellenised works produced by Hebrew thinkers before the Christian era, and is held by some to be a product of Alexandrian thought in the apostolic age. In this book, written for men who were not unacquainted with the teachings of Greek philosophy, we find again the oldest imagery, and even a revival of what is called "the old mythological conception of the world as the work of God's hands, and of an arbitrary omnipotence," which was supposed to have been "cut away at a blow"[1] several centuries before by the author of Prov. viii. Thus we read, "Thy almighty hand, that made the world of formless matter, lacked not means to send among them a multitude of bears," etc. (xi. 17). "God shall laugh them to scorn. . . . He shall rend them, and cast them down headlong. . . . He shall shake them from the foundation" (iv. 18, 19). "Thou canst show Thy great strength at all times when Thou wilt; and who may withstand the power of Thine arm? . . . Thou canst do all things, and winkest at the sins of men, that they may repent" (xi. 21–23). These are but samples of a multitude of passages which might be quoted, but they are

[1] Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, p. 161.

sufficient to prove that neither the jealous care of Jewish Talmudists nor the searching discrimination of Christian critics can relieve us of any difficulty, or deprive us of any advantage which may spring from anthropomorphic terminology as a characteristic of Hebrew Theism, not only in its most primitive form, but in its most matured developments.[1]

Having thus assisted to fasten the reproach of anthropomorphism upon Hebrew Theists, I hasten to affirm that if this ponderous word can be justly esteemed a reproach, it is one which has been incurred, not only by Judaism, but by many distinguished philosophers. Thus Plato, who is supposed to have been destitute of the modern conception of personality, found himself compelled to employ an anthropomorphic vocabulary when describing the emergence of the phenomenal universe from abstract ideas. The Stoics used it freely in writing of the universal Reason. Agnostic exponents of physical science are so habituated to its use that even trees and climbing plants are credited with purpose and method in their strife for survival, while molecules, "Forces" and "Laws," appear as conscious agents in the writings of materialistic evolutionists. Can this be because, like Gen. i., these works have been condescendingly written "for an untutored age"? In view of these literary phenomena we need not pity the ancient believers in a "Living God," because their religious reverence found no release from the inexorable law which makes all language analogical;—and which even compels Euclid to describe the ideal "points" and "lines" of pure mathematics by terms which imply some occupancy of space; terms which have to be elaborately deprived of their common significance by arbitrary definitions before they can be used in elementary propositions. So obstinate, however, is the "original sin" of human language, that these definitions are violated in the printed figures which exhibit problems to

[1] See Note B, p. 61.

the eye, and in the demonstrations which discuss them as forms which can be produced by the human hand![1]

This defensive comparison is not intended to mask the fact that anthropomorphic expressions in the Old Testament mean more than they do in many other cases. They cannot be interpreted by mere freedom of expression; but evidently imply, and were intended to imply, that God is a Person. Their authors speak of Him in terms derived from man's knowledge of himself, because they believe that man was made in His likeness. We have not the advantage of being acquainted with any superhuman persons, or they might supply us with more dignified forms of speech. Some may think it wiser to speak of the Eternal Being in abstract terms, and for safety may deal only in negations; but nothing impersonal can express personality, and thus anthropomorphic language is the only form of speech in which Theism can utter its thoughts.

It is important to remember that the feelings excited by such language must necessarily differ according to the estimate we have formed of man's origin, nature, and destiny. If we dwell chiefly upon man's anatomical resemblance to the lower animals, and ignore or deny those spiritual faculties which distinguish him from anthropoid apes, we shall have a very mean idea of God as a sort of anthropoid deity;—a being who stands about as much above us as our nearest earthly kinsfolk stand, or once stood, below. But in proportion as we recognise the true glory of man's self-conscious, rational, and volitional nature, we shall feel that the highest, and indeed only tolerable ideal of man's Creator and Lord, is that of a being who is not less, but more than men; and therefore cannot lack those essential elements of personality which give man his place of royalty in the universe.

When the anthropomorphic expressions of the Old Testament have been duly analysed, they yield these essen-

[1] See Note C, p. 61.

tial constituents of Personality. It is not suggested that Hebrew Theists ever found or even sought for a philosophical definition of Personality. Had they done this they would have been in advance of the greatest thinkers of Greece, for the problem which still occasions perplexity was scarcely apprehended as a problem until forced upon attention by controversy respecting the Person of Christ. But while, in common with all ancient writers, they had no abstract doctrine of Personality, whether human or divine, their idea of God's nature though exceedingly simple, and held without any consciousness of the metaphysical problems involved, nevertheless answered to the most satisfactory modern idea of Personality. Throughout the Old Testament it is assumed, as in Gen. i., that God is a self-conscious Being: that He possesses what we call Thought to designate the essential faculty of Mind; that He knows Himself and views His creation as other than Himself; that, like men, He has feelings,—likes and dislikes, with power of choice among objects; and will or self-determination, which may be influenced by external objects and occurrences, but is not controlled by them, nor even by subjective desires. It is assumed that God thus possesses that spontaneity which enables Him to move without being moved, and so to become the only conceivable First Cause of the Cosmos. It is always assumed also that God is like man in this: that He distinguishes between right and wrong in the relations of rational beings; and that He rules His own actions in accordance with those eternal principles which human science may or may not discover or verify, but which are as necessary and unalterable as the truths of mathematics in another sphere.

In strict accordance with these fundamental and persistent assumptions, God is always regarded in the Old Testament as holding the most varied and ceaseless relations with men. Modern Judaism in its most cultured

type is rather a philosophy than a faith, and probably owes more to Spinoza than to the prophets; but the Hebrew Theism we are dealing with never evaporated into a pantheistic mist, and never congealed into an icy Deism which hides God in an abyss beneath a mechanical universe in which He has no part. For the prophets and their disciples He was not merely the First Cause, but the perpetual upholder and governor of nature, and above all the interested Friend and Master of man. To them He was never a passionless spectator of the human tragedy, but always an ardent sympathiser with men of good intent, a succourer of all who served Him, and a Hearer of all suppliant souls. They called Him by many names which described His various relations. He was The Strong One, The Righteous One; He was King, Lawgiver, Judge, Saviour, Kinsman, Father, and Friend. He was a Potter fashioning men and nations, while leaving them free to sin, free to repent, and free even to defy. He was the Shepherd, the Vineyard Keeper. He was everything that man could need, everything and more than all that man could think of as desirable and good. Always active in thought and work among the striving peoples, always aiming at a final good for the world, always faithful, compassionate, and merciful; yet always changeless in His hatred of falsity, cruelty, oppression, and lustfulness in men.

Of all the relations with the Cosmos thus lightly sketched, the ethical were the most supremely important; but before speaking of these it may be well to emphasise three other characteristics of Hebrew Theism which affect the mode in which these relations were held to be maintained.

However paradoxical it may appear to some minds, it is certainly a fact that although God was worshipped as a Personal Being in closest intercourse with men, He was

quite as positively regarded as Invisible, *i.e.* without a shape discernible by the senses, and Inscrutable, *i.e.* unsearchable by the human intellect.

Opinions may differ as to the antiquity of either or both of these beliefs, but no one questions that they were held and guarded with extreme jealousy for many generations before the Christian era. Whether such views can or cannot be reasonably reconciled with a belief in Revelation and Inspiration, the fact remains that they were firmly held together. The vacant Holy of Holies, in which no figurative emblem of God was hidden behind the shrouding veil, was a symbol to the later Jews, if not to their remote ancestors, of God's invisible presence in the Cosmos; yet it was also a symbol of the truth that He could commune with men. Man was unable by searching to find out God as he might find hidden treasure; nor could he ascend to the "secret of the Lord" by an effort of speculative thought. Yet God had revealed Himself to men. He was the Inscrutable but not the Unknowable; He was the Invisible but not the absent, or the absolute God of dialectics.

4. In close connection with this idea of God as Invisible and Inscrutable, yet in close relations with man, we find a most striking characteristic of Hebrew Theism in the doctrine of Angelic Representation.

The Old Testament contains no explanatory account of mediating messengers between heaven and earth; but it speaks familiarly of their existence, and assumes the prevalence of belief in their activity. They appear in many narratives as rational beings, with intellectual faculties similar to man's, capable of appearing in a man-like form, and of speaking to men in their own language. Their office is described in their generic name, which signifies a messenger, and they move in space unimpeded by gross material bodies. Modern science has no negative

to pronounce against the possibility or probability of their existence as travelling servants of Omnipotence. A distinguished savant has argued with much force that their hypothetical acceptance would fill a great gap in his scientific theory of the universe. Even the doctrine of evolution favours the probability that such beings will hereafter be evolved, if they have not already been produced. I am not anxious, however, to vindicate the Hebrew belief, and only wish at present to note its theological significance, as offering a partial explanation of divine revelation to men; and even this I refer to mainly in order to point out how very partial is the explanation it supplies.

Closely examined, the so-called Theophanies of the Old Testament seem reducible to divine appearances only in a representative sense. *E.g.* one of Abraham's three mysterious visitants is spoken of in the same narrative as a man and as an angel, and yet again is identified with God, and speaks with divine authority to the patriarch.[1] These are either absurd discrepancies which stamp the author as below the intellectual level of an Arabian story-teller, or they prove that the narrator meant to indicate an angelic being who at least for the occasion wore a manlike form, and who spoke with authority as the plenipotentiary of God. This was the interpretation adopted by all those among the later Rabbins who did not, like Philo, refine the historical narrative into an allegory. Their elaborated angelology was puerile and preposterous; but they were acute critics, and were not without scriptural data for their belief that there is one highest creature, fitly called "the Angel of the Face," because allowed an altogether unique privilege of access to God's presence. They also held that this representative was always present as an intermediary whenever God was said to have appeared to men.

The most significant passages in support of this view

[1] Gen. xviii. 2, 16, 23, 26, xix. 1, 29.

occur in what are supposed to be among the most ancient portions of the Hexateuch. In Ex. xxiii. 20, God is introduced as speaking thus to Moses: "Behold, I send an Angel before thee to keep thee by the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Take ye heed of him, and hearken unto his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgression: *for My name is in him.*" In Ex. xxxiii. 12–23, where God is said to be speaking with him "as a man speaketh unto his friend," Moses pleads that he is still ignorant of God's "ways," and therefore does not know Him. Hence he entreats that God will reveal Himself more perfectly. Thus in the midst of a supposed "Theophany" the human servant cries out for a still unattained vision of God, exclaiming, "I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory." In response, the Invisible One declares, "Thou canst not see My face: for there shall no man see Me and live"; but He makes this promise, "I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim *the name of the Lord* before thee." I shall have occasion hereafter to call attention to the deeper theological teaching which ensues as the fulfilment of this promise, but wish to call attention here to the fact that an angelic representative is so identified with God, that the power to deal with human transgression is imputed to him, and his attendance upon Israel is treated as equivalent to the divine presence. The denial that God can be seen is put into the lips of one who was "face to face" with Moses; and the voice which promises to declare, and subsequently does declare, the name of the Lord, is therefore evidently the voice of the being in whom God's name is affirmed to be resident. Thus the Theophany is entirely representative; and, apart from its declaration of God's ethical nature, the deepest thought of the narrative, even if we regard it as mythological poetry, or the account of some entranced seer's vision, is that God can only be revealed to men by some chosen finite agent.

The doctrine of angels thus illustrated, relieved the Hebrews who accepted it of a great difficulty by establishing a living channel of communication between man and the unseen world; but obviously it only removed the mystery of God's primary revelation of Himself to an invisible region, and left the higher philosophical problem untouched. Manifestly the most exalted angel could only receive by revelation that knowledge of God's nature which qualified him to act and speak in His name. He might excel man in enlightenment as the sun excels a taper, but he could have no light until illumined from the eternal source of light in the divine self-knowledge. How, then, did revelation pass from the Divine Sender to the angelic messenger? Here Hebrew Theism was confronted with a problem which it was powerless to solve. Even a human mind cannot be searched by another mind similar to itself. Every self-conscious thinker, though he be but a child, is utterly unknowable until he gives expression to his thoughts. The revelation of an unseen mind is, indeed, a fact of hourly experience, and familiarity conceals its mysteriousness from multitudes; but as soon as we begin to reflect upon the human analogy, we are compelled to acknowledge that neither man nor angel could "know the things of God" unless it pleased God to reveal His invisible thought by presenting some intelligible signs which correspond to human speech. Thus Hebrew Theism in its highest developments left a great gulf between God and man. It affirmed God as an Eternal and Invisible Person, the Author and Active Ruler of the Cosmos. It affirmed the fact of revelation. It described God as speaking, and assigned to His word creative energy. It affirmed that wisdom came forth out of His mouth, and reached men as rivers of instruction in law and prophecy; it held that God was revealed representatively by messengers from heaven; but how the things of God's self-knowledge were, or conceiv-

ably could be, first transmitted to a made and finite mind, Hebrew Theism either feared to ask or totally failed to answer.

5. In close connection with this problem, but without pretension to be esteemed its solution, we find another characteristic of Hebrew Theism in its doctrine of the Spirit of God. The name was derived from the wind, or breath, which mysteriously blows from an unseen source in the heavens, and is essential to the life of plants and animals, including man. It is not easy to define what was meant by this expression. The Cosmogonist of Gen. i. speaks of this wind or spirit as brooding upon the face of the waters, and apparently intends to suggest that this "brooding" originated the order and life which followed. The author of Gen. ii., though using another word, speaks of God as breathing into man's nostrils as a means of imparting a human soul to a body already created from the dust. Sometimes this Spirit appears to be an impartation of energy which increases a man's active powers, but has no moral or intellectual effect. Sometimes it seems to be a poetic name for a reviving, refreshing, or sustaining influence which can be poured out like rain upon the parched earth; sometimes it comforts, sometimes it troubles; but in either case it stimulates the emotional nature as a penalty or as a boon. Sometimes it exalts the intellectual powers, and lifts men above their normal level of thought and utterance; freeing them from material restrictions, and enabling them to hold fellowship with angelic guests, and to receive communications, reaching them through various media, from above.

But the highest form in which the Spirit of God appears in the Old Testament is that in which personality is attributed; and this personality is distinctly regarded as the actual and active presence of God. As compared with accounts of external and representative manifestations, many allusions to the Spirit exhibit a belief that Invisibility

does not mean absence, nor Inscrutability imply human nescience. God was thought of as one who revealed Himself occasionally by representatives, and commonly by objective symbols of thought, in nature, in the law and by the prophets, but as always nigh at hand, and always acquainted with the secret thoughts of men. He was thought of as specially approachable in the Temple at appointed seasons, and for sacrificial worship; but as always and everywhere near to lowly and contrite hearts, and closer than any outward form to such as thirsted for His presence. His Spirit could never be escaped by guilty fugitives whom it saw and judged, and awaited in the uttermost parts of the earth, and even in the grave. As a friendly helper, guide, and inspiring guest this Spirit might be given or withdrawn at will; but withdrawal never meant absence, but only a penal deprivation of inward comfort and sanctifying aid; and giving meant God's own bestowment of His favour and love. In all cases the Spirit of the Lord appears in the Old Testament as either God's invisible energy or as the invisible God acting to create; to impart life; to sustain and enrich the life already given. It is specially spoken of as given to strengthen and quicken man in body, soul, or spirit; to exalt the mental faculties so that men are enabled to see and understand what must otherwise remain unknown; to impel and enable utterance and action in a fashion otherwise impossible: but it never appears to do away with the necessity for the objective presentation of truth.

6. We come now to that characteristic of Hebrew Theism which is its unique and crowning glory as an ancient faith, namely, that it is essentially ethical in its idea of God and His relations with man.

Ethical Monotheism has its necessary basis in the doctrine of man's creation in God's likeness. The relation thus set up necessarily yields the idea of moral obligation. Given

two persons similar to ourselves in powers of thought, desire, choice, and volition, and the necessity for the golden rule is given also. We are so constituted that we cannot even think of the Creator without forming some opinion of what He ought to do and ought not to do. These opinions may vary, and may often be absurd and profane, but the Old Testament recognises that their existence is inevitable in rational beings. God is commonly represented by the prophets as making His appeal to them, and as stooping to reason with men as One who desires to be rightly judged and understood. The chief motive and spring of divine revelation is constantly set before us as the yearning of a righteous God to be truly known, and therefore trusted and obeyed by His people.

Perhaps the richest and most fundamental passage in the Old Testament as an expression of ethical Monotheism, is the declaration of God's name in Ex. xxxiv. in response to the prayer of Moses, which has already been noticed. Whatever the age of its present literary form, and it is certainly ancient, its content is a thought of God which underlies and unifies the whole Scriptures. I have no wish to emphasise or to divert attention from the supernatural elements of the narrative in which this proclamation of God's nature occurs; but I would earnestly submit to any readers who may find these elements a stumbling-block, and are tempted to withhold their serious attention on this account, that no theory of interpretation should be allowed to obscure the grandeur of the theology itself. Some will read the narrative without misgiving as the unadorned history of a miraculous event in which physical phenomena were witnessed by human eyes; others may read it as a poetic myth designed to arrest attention, and enchain the admiring interest of multitudes, while preserving a sublime truth in a form of beauty which the world would not willingly let die. In any case the doctrine is the same. The glory of the Lord

is not material splendour, but moral excellence. The answer to Moses' prayer was not a blinding fire mist, not a storm cloud sweeping past his craggy shelter, but a declared character, and in particular the character of God as He stands related to erring and sinful men.

We are frequently assured that the God of the Old Testament is a harsh and vindictive being, quite unlike the Father whose name was declared by Christ. He is painted for us as the author of a *lex talionis* which fittingly represents His own vengeful justice as the punisher of sin. But here God is said to have revealed Himself to Moses as One whose essential nature is not austerity but graciousness, not implacability but mercifulness. As clearly as words can speak the Lord proclaims Himself the friend of sinners; and to paraphrase John's words respecting Christ we may almost say, "And Moses beheld His glory, the glory of a Father, full of grace and truth."

It is significant that in Num. xiv. Moses pleads that mercy may be shown to the people on the ground of the glorious name thus proclaimed. He sees (or the author of the passage sees) that forgiveness is greater than implacability; and therefore appeals to the divine magnanimity, and deprecates its failure under provocation. "Let the power of the Lord be great, according as Thou has spoken, saying, 'The Lord is slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and that will by no means clear the guilty.' . . . Pardon, I pray Thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of Thy mercy, and according as Thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt until now." This prayer for mercy, in the faith that it is God's eternal nature and glory to forgive, is the keynote to all the sweetest songs of Israel. Throughout the Psalms and Prophets pardon is sued for, and every kind of blessing besought for God's name sake. There is not a single instance of prayer for mercy based on any trust in the

efficacy of sacrifice to take away sin, while the futility and offensiveness of sacrifice when offered as a substitute for mercy or justice is indignantly declared.[1] These expressions are in profound harmony with the letter and spirit of the ceremonial institutes.[2] The ritual law gave no encouragement to any belief that sin-offerings were available for deliberate transgression. Such offerings were enjoined, and had a definite educational value; but their scope was strictly limited, and for wilful offences were as sternly forbidden by the Priestly Code as they were indignantly denounced by the psalmists and prophets. The "Old Covenant" savours throughout of inexorable demand, and no more provides forgiveness for its own breach, than the English criminal law contains assurances of mercy. But it is a grave, though common, mistake to imagine that this is incompatible with a belief that there is mercy in God. The function of law is to obtain obedience and to punish rebellion; but the administration of mercy by the Supreme Lawgiver is not relinquished or impeded by the fact that the terms of its bestowal are not formulated in statutes. Remission remains within His authority, and is conditioned only by regard for the sanctity of those objects which laws are enacted to protect. Hence in the highest and holiest minds among the Hebrews, as expressed in Ps. cxix., veneration for divine law blended with faith in divine mercy. The consciousness of legal guilt was intensified, while at the same time it was deprived of its natural power to crush the sinner into a demoralising state of despair, by a faith, which was often a saving faith, in the divine graciousness and mercy as revealed by the Name in which generations had trusted.

[1] Cf. 1 Sam. xv. 22; Ps. li. 16, 17; Hos. vi. 6.

[2] That the same fundamental principle runs through codes of different dates is evident. Cf. Lev. xx. 10; Num. xv. 27–30, xxxv. 30, 34; Deut. xvii. 2–13, xxii. 22–25.

The ethical conception of God which thus emerges into view becomes clearer when we consider the relation of the Divine Name to the laws with which it stands connected, not only in a particular section of Exodus, but in the entire Hexateuch as it existed in pre-Christian times. The fundamental demand of the Decalogue is love. "Thou shalt love" is the universal ordinance, and all the rest is explanation or application to the various relations of life. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God" comes first, and then follows, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour." What, then, are the legitimate deductions which may be drawn from these precepts respecting the character of the God to whom they are attributed? Clearly that He Himself is lovable, and that He loves men. Whether we criticise the admonitions as divine, or as human compositions, devoid of any supernatural authority, they assuredly disclose the writer's idea of God. No man who regarded Him as a stern and remorseless despot, would have conceived the preposterous notion of ascribing to His heart a thirst for man's affection, or a considerate insistence on love as due to all His creatures from each other.

If we pass on to examine the remainder of the Decalogue, and even the multifarious statutes which touch the details of social commerce, the same deduction may be drawn. Even the severest sanctions and the much abused *lex talionis* exhibit an inexorable abhorrence of cruelty and of selfishness in every form. They teach that God will not smile upon any act by which one man hurts another. God will watch over the rights of the humblest bondman, and will judge the harsh master, the unjust ruler, the unfair trader, the injurious person of every station and degree. Every victim of wrong was thus taught to believe that he had a friend and champion in God. Every high-handed criminal was taught that he had ultimately to reckon with God, and must account to Him for his offences. Yet still the name of God remained the hope of the penitent and contrite heart.

The Hebrew idea of God shines out with peculiar beauty in a large class of admonitions which no human law could enforce, because demanding justice, kindness, and mercy in multifarious details of conduct which no finite mind could judge. After many of these ethical but extra-legal injunctions there is written, with sublime faith in Him who ponders the heart, "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God."[1] The quiet reserve which delivers no threat where it cannot enact a penalty, yet holds up God before the man who fails to love his brother, reveals an ethical conception of God which harmonises with the Sermon on the Mount, and with Christ's vivid parable of judgment between the sheep and the goats. It recognises the superficiality of all statute law as clearly as Paul discerned it, and unmistakably declares that God will be satisfied with nothing less than the genuine, heartfelt, handwrought love which the Decalogue solemnly requires.

III

The limits assigned to this Essay preclude even a brief review of the meeting between Jew and Greek, and their reciprocal influence on each other, nor will they permit a complete examination of the way in which Hebrew Theism is reproduced and consummated in the New Testament. I shall therefore deal only with those characteristics of Christianity which are denounced by Jews as corruptions, or are attacked by anti-Theistic writers as incredible. In pursuance of this purpose I shall have to speak—1. Of the Unity of God (*a*) as a doctrine to which Christianity is pledged, and by which all its tenets must consent to be judged; (*b*) as a doctrine which is declared by many anti-Theistic writers to be philosophically unthinkable. 2. The Invisibility and Inscrutability of God in relation to various theories of manifestation. 3. The Christian

[1] Cf. Lev. xix. 13, 14, 32, xxv. 17, 35–38, 43.

view of God's manifestation as an elucidation of the problem of Unity. 4. The Ethical conception of God as interpreted by the New Testament doctrine of Salvation.

1. Christian Theism, as formulated by some ecclesiastical creeds, is thought by many critics, both inside and outside the Church, to be utterly incompatible with faith in the Unity of God. I am not careful to discuss the justice of this opinion. It may be true that some documents which were framed as rigidly as possible to exclude Arians and Sabellians from the ancient Church, are incurably Tritheistic in their only intelligible meaning; but assuredly their authors never intended to affirm a plurality of Gods; nor can any individual teacher of acknowledged position, or any Church which now retains these creeds as symbols of the true faith, be charged with consciously defending them as Tritheistic. It is neither my business nor my ambition to defend or attack these formulæ. They may conceivably, though it requires a large imagination, be reconcilable with the doctrines of the New Testament and with the religious beliefs of their own authors. To me, however, their interest is chiefly historical. Christian Theism has no authoritative exposition outside the original documents which have come down to us from the Founders of the Church, and I shall be content to insist that the authors of the New Testament as reporters and exponents of Christ's doctrine emphatically teach the Unity of God.

No statements could be stronger or less ambiguous than those of the New Testament on this subject, *e.g.* it is recorded that on one occasion Christ quoted, with entire approval, the ancient words, "Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God is one Lord" (Mark xii. 29–32). At another time He said, "Call no man your father on the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven" (Matt. xxiii. 9). Similarly, John writes, "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (John xvii. 3). Paul frequently reiterates the same

truth. "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him" (1 Cor. viii. 6). "Now, a Mediator is not a mediator of One; but God is One" (Gal. iii. 20). "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. iv. 6). "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. ii. 5). James is equally explicit, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well" (Jas. ii. 19). These are not exceptional passages, but, in short, pithy phrases, they sum up the truth which permeates the New Testament from end to end.

There is no uncertainty in these clarion notes. It may be urged that other doctrines of the New Testament are at variance with them, and such a plea deserves examination. But the doctrine of Divine Unity is so clearly stated, and is so strongly confirmed by reason and by the intuitions of the heart, which cannot divide its worship of the Highest, that nothing which conflicts with this fundamental idea can have any claim to be respected. It is impossible to put back the human mind behind the hard-won victories of Hebrew faith and Greek philosophy, which, from their remote and independent positions, witness to mankind that we live in a Cosmos, and not in the midst of a chaotic concourse of fragments, or under a divided and uncertain rule. There is either One God or there is No God. This is the ultimatum which philosophy and theology are with one accord presenting to the nations which still worship many gods; and the last great fight between faith and unbelief is being simplified to this one issue.

It will not be necessary to insist upon the fact that the New Testament agrees with the Old in representing God as a Person, and that, yielding to the inexorable necessities of human language and thought, it speaks of Him in anthropo-

morphic terms. It is only necessary to refer to this obvious truth, because we have now to deal with a difficulty which arises from the combination of the doctrine of the Divine Personality with that of Unity. Probably the most serious objection which Theists have ever had to face is that which affirms that the existence of a Sole Eternal Person is inconceivable. Many earnest thinkers when perplexed by the mysteries of Trinitarianism are inclined to flee into what is inconveniently called Unitarianism as a haven of intellectual simplicity and rest. In reality it is neither a simple nor a restful position, and is assailed by Pantheists and Agnostics with immense force.

Mr. Herbert Spencer is so absolutely certain that in all consciousness of self, a not-self, or an other-than-self is given, that in discussing the necessary but unknowable source of all things he ceases to be an Agnostic, at least to this extent, that he knows that whatever else it is, it cannot be a conscious person. He tells us that consciousness is "constituted of ideas and feelings caused by objects and occurrences,"[1] and therefore there cannot be an Eternal Being who is both subject and object to Himself. I have criticised this sentence elsewhere as an altogether one-sided statement,[2] but it is none the less cogent as a positive assertion of the truth that a subject mind cannot exist without an object, because it fails to affirm what is equally true, namely, that an object cannot exist without a subject, and that the two are correlative terms.

Pantheism presses the same difficulty against all believers in a personal God, and to this extent agrees with Mr. Spencer that such a Being cannot be the First and Sole Cause of the now existent universe, because without an objective world He could have no consciousness. Pantheism affirms in various forms that God is the

[1] *Nineteenth Century*, Jan. 1884.
[2] *The Mystery of God*, p. 70.

eternal and infinite substance beside which, or as it fancifully says, "beside Whom," there is and can be none else; and it denies consciousness to the All, as the Infinite One, because the whole of all that is cannot leave room for an object to itself, and cannot be an object to an outside or transcendent mind, seeing that by definition such a mind cannot exist outside the All.

In some of its less extreme forms Pantheism affirms that God becomes conscious in man or in similar beings, because the Infinite One is also the manifold, and so within the Eternal Unity there is the ceaseless play of subject and object. According to this view consciousness belongs to God only as He issues forth into finite and changing forms of self-manifestation, *i.e.* His own finite parts discern their self-existence as distinct from other parts; but can never be viewed as objects by the great All, because in that All they are themselves included. Pantheism therefore bears powerful witness to a philosophic principle which, if valid, appears to be fatal to every non-Christian form of Theism, namely, that the Personality of the One God can only be conceived of as possible by virtue of an internal variety in His own Being, some play of inward relationships in His own nature. Unless Theists can meet the demands of this principle without lapsing into Pantheism, they can only retain their faith as an unreasoned conviction, and can never hope to give it a philosophical interpretation.

Three questions are likely to arise in the minds of cultured men who have not read widely on this particular subject. 1. Do Theists admit the force of the difficulty thus urged by Agnostics and Pantheists? 2. Has any non-Christian Theist successfully grappled with it? 3. Failing this, does Christian Theism possess a unique solution of the problem?

In replying to these questions I cannot do better than take Dr. Martineau as the most distinguished and capable writer who has discussed the problem from a Theistic

standpoint, which excludes any assistance which the Logos doctrine of John may be able to afford. The Christian Theism which incorporates this doctrine stands apart from any other faith or theory, and as Dr. Martineau rejects it, he properly represents what for the purposes of this discussion must be called non-Christian systems of Theism. By placing him in this position I am not denying him the name Christian in any sense in which he would accept its application.

That Dr. Martineau admits the gravity of the difficulty under review is well known to readers of his works, and will be made evident here by adequate quotations. His *Study of Religion* contains lucid and beautiful discussions of many Theistic problems, but it lamentably fails to discover an "other-than-self" for God, while admitting with Mr. Spencer and all Pantheists that without such an object a Divine Subject cannot conceivably exist. In his later work on the *Seat of Authority in Religion*, this failure is tacitly confessed by the making of a new attempt in which additional elements are introduced. The nature of the problem is thus stated: "The moment we conceive of mind at all, or any operation of mind, we must concurrently conceive of something other than it as engaging its activity. . . . God therefore cannot stand for us as the sole and exhaustive term in the realm of uncreated being: as early and as long as He is, must also be somewhat objective to Him."[1] Hence he sets out anew in search of an eternal "other-than-self" for God, and the penalty of failure is either to find faith in God evaporating into Pantheism, or dying out into an Agnosticism which at least knows this—that the First Cause of the Cosmos is impersonal.

As a fundamental basis for such an "other-than-self," Dr. Martineau postulates the existence of matter as a solid substance which occupies space, "as the rudimentary object for the intellectual and dynamic action of the

[1] *Seat of Authority in Religion*, p. 32.

Supreme Subject." He speaks in a singularly hesitant way about this *datum*, and is well aware that many will refuse the concession; but finally he grasps it as a necessary factor, and proceeds to build his theory on this eternal rock, which may or may not be solid in reality, but must be solid for his theory. But when we have granted this hypothetical but not unreasonable *datum*, we are frankly told that it is not a sufficient objective, because it gives "no scope for the alternatives of will or the exercise of creative reason." In beautiful language we are led through various stages of creative activity whereby God puts His power into matter and produces inorganic and organic forms, and at length living creatures. These created objects are declared to have always been in existence, partly because creation in time is unthinkable, partly because, if temporal creation were admitted, this would leave God without an object prior to the first creative act. Hence the "Solitary God inhabiting eternity," who used to figure largely in some systems of theology, has been renounced as an impossible being. The eternal creation of an infinite series of temporal things must therefore be conceded. Such a *datum* is large and involves peculiar difficulties, but it is confessedly still too small. "The power thus lodged" in things made "still remains in one sense subjective to God," *i.e.* such an eternal creation is little if anything more than our old acquaintance the Stoic's Cosmos, which is the vesture of one universal intelligence, and all its movements are the activities of this immanent soul. Dr. Martineau is quite aware of this, and again declares that it is only when "we emerge into the conscious *ego* of intellectual existence, which finally sets up *another person*," that we find an objective to God which does not identify "all power with His will. . . . The full security against the dissolving mists of Pantheism is first obtained when we . . . . stand in the presence of the supernatural in man, to whom an *alternative* is given,

and in whom is a real mind or miniature of God, consciously acting from a selected end in view. Here it is that we first learn the solemn difference between what is and what might be; and carrying the lesson abroad, discover how faint a symbol is visible nature of its ideal essence and Divine Cause. . . . The outward world is not God's characteristic sphere of *self-expression*. . . . The silence is first broken, the self-expression comes forth in the moral phenomena of our life."[1]

Passing over much which invites attention in the intermediate stages of this New Genesis, let us fix our attention on the "other-than-self" which is provided in manlike beings, assumed to be eternally created, and so truly in the likeness of God as to be described as His "miniatures."

With sincere regret I am compelled to point out that Dr. Martineau has not arranged for the creation of these "miniatures." They are presented as the culminating triumphs of an ascending scale of created works; yet without their existence God could not have produced the lowest effect on matter, seeing by hypothesis He can only be a Person, because other persons live to give scope for the play of His faculties. Eternal creation is postulated, but this convenient phrase must not conceal from us the obvious truth, that God can no more be thought of as producing the conditions of His own Personality eternally than at a point in time. If these miniatures eternally exist, it must be either because God contains in Himself the independent power to produce them, or because, like matter, they eternally coexist with God, and are not caused by Him, but are themselves multitudinous causes of movement in the Cosmos. On this point I must quote against the author an apparently forgotten dictum of his earlier book: "I think of a Cause as needing something else in order to work, *i.e.* some condition present with it. . . . If there be a condition requis-

[1] *Seat of Authority in Religion*, pp. 35, 36.

ite for the Divine Cause, it must from the nature of the case be already there, *i.e.* be self-existent with Him."[1] This sentence was written when Dr. Martineau was contemplating "matter" and "space" as the only discoverable *data* for choice, but it is quite as axiomatic if for matter we substitute "manlike" persons. If they are the necessary conditions of God's Personality, they must "be self-existent with Him," and He is no more their Creator than they collectively are His. It thus appears that Dr. Martineau is impaled on the horns of a dilemma, either of which is fatal to his theory. If God actually created all finite persons, it must be conceded that some uncreated "other-than-self" existed with God, or within God's personal fulness of being, as the indispensable condition of His own causality. If, on the other hand, God did not create all finite persons, He is not the First Cause of the universe, and Theism disappears. Where Dr. Martineau has thus failed it is unlikely that any living or coming philosopher will succeed. He has failed where Plato and Aristotle and Zeno failed, and where all the trained hosts of metaphysicians have failed for centuries. He has had the vain attempts of the past before him, and, confessing their failure, has laboured hard and skilfully to supply what was lacking in them, and to avoid their defects, while still persistently refusing to acknowledge the value even to philosophy of that Eternal Self-expression which the inspired fisherman of Galilee described as the Word. The outcome of his labour is that he has virtually demonstrated the impossibility of the Unitarian position. His arguments to show that the First Cause must be One and Personal are admirable; but his attempt to render such a Being conceivable breaks down. Hence it is not unreasonable to affirm, that if God is to be revered by philosophic minds as the Creator of the Cosmos and of man; if we are not to reel back into the insensate folly of a materialistic evolution

[1] *Study of Religion*, vol. i. p. 381, 2nd ed.

which could not start itself, and has no starter; or if in flying from this ghastly absurdity we are not to deceive our religious yearnings by using the word God as an ideal name for a godless universe,—we must discover some adequate Objective or Divine Self-expression, which so enriches our conception of the Divine Personality, that we can think of God as containing in Himself all the conditions of self-conscious and spontaneous volitional energy of life.

Before advancing to another stage of this discussion, it may be well to register certain remarkable features of Dr. Martineau's theory. (1) The very existence of a personal God is staked upon a theory of matter which the author regards as uncertain, and which in his *Study of Religion* he felt obliged to relinquish as useless. Were this scientific hypothesis, to which he resorts despairingly in his later work, disproved, his theology would have to be shifted to a new foundation, or perish. (2) The existence of a personal God is furthermore staked on the eternal existence of some "Self-expression" which is only discoverable in man or some manlike creature. (3) The peculiar difficulty which besets the theory, when eternal matter has been given, is the production of some self-expression which shall *not* itself be divine. The hypothesis of God eternally issuing into some self-expression which may be identified with Himself is unwittingly shown to be free from the peculiar difficulties which the theory has been elaborated to overcome. It is not a part of the created universe, and therefore its identification with God has no Pantheistic tendency; and it does not stake God's existence on the eternity of matter and finite creatures. Thus we are taught, none the less surely because quite unintentionally, that it is more philosophic to think of a Divine Self-expression which was always "with God" and "*was God*," than of one which was not God, yet was with Him in the beginning. (4) Eternal creation being not only conceded, but demanded, the antiquated arguments

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and sneers of Arians, Socinians, and Jews against Eternal Sonship are consigned to the limbo of metaphysical antiquities. If eternal creation be more thinkable than creation in time, an eternal Son must be more thinkable than the Arian Son, who once began to be. These contributions towards a true philosophy of Theism would have made the heart of Athanasius sing for joy.

2. It will be remembered that in our examination of the Hebrew doctrine of God's self-revelation, we found an unbridged gulf between the Infinite Mind and finite thinkers, and we saw that the doctrine of angels only removes the difficulty to a distance. Incidentally Dr. Martineau assists our faith in the existence of these manlike creatures by asserting the absolute necessity of some such beings to philosophical Theism. Those who smile at such a belief as childish may well take note of this significant fact. But we have not found any relief to the Old Testament difficulty. The rational believer as well as the rational sceptic is compelled to acknowledge that the mere postulation of these creatures under any name leaves the problem of revelation unsolved. It seems remarkable, but is in truth quite natural, that the gap in Hebrew theology should thus closely correspond to the gap in philosophical Theism. Assuredly it is profoundly significant that if without sacrificing Divine Unity we can discover a divine self-expression, we shall at the same time solve the double problem of Personality for Philosophy and of Revelation for Theology. If John's "Word" can be received, not as a second God, but as the necessary and eternal self-expression of the One God, it supplies at once an objective for the Divine Mind and a manifestation of God to His creatures.

Seeing that these two topics are inseparably conjoined, and that Christian Theism offers one doctrine of God's Person as a solution of both mysteries, I shall preface our

examination of this doctrine by pointing out that the New Testament agrees with the Old in maintaining the Invisibility and Inscrutability of God as the correlatives of its doctrine of Revelation.

The statements made on this subject are as clear as those which affirm the Divine Unity. "No man hath seen God at any time." He is "the King eternal, incorruptible, invisible, the only God." "The blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable; whom no man hath seen at any time, neither can see." The inscrutability of man is made an illustration and a proof of the assertion that the human intellect has no power to discern the unrevealed mind of God. "For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man that is in him? Even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God."[1] The visible works of nature declare something of their author; but, as we have just heard, they are not the characteristic sphere of His self-expression. To our deepest questions they have no reply. They shed no light on the mystery of our future. Sin, Sorrow, Pain, Aspiration, Hope, and Fear are all made terrible, and their issues are wrapped in thick darkness by death. In view of this appalling mystery we ask, What does God think of us? What will He do with us? How shall we be judged, and on what principle will our lot be appointed in that awakening which most men anticipate yet know not whether to desire or dread? These heart-shaking questions are not illumined by the wonders of the sky or earth or sea. To all our agonised inquiries Nature answers, "Such wisdom is not in me." If we but knew what God is, and what His thoughts are in relation to our lives, such knowledge would be more than all the sciences. But divine thoughts are at least as unsearchable as man's. We can guess, we can draw reason-

[1] Cf. John i. 18; 1 Tim. i. 17, vi. 15, 16; 1 Cor. ii. 11.

able inferences; but we cannot find out God as we find out worlds and elements and laws.

At this point the New Testament still agrees with the Old, in the conviction that though man cannot ascend to achieve the scientific observation of God, yet God can impart to man a true knowledge of Himself. The dictum, "no man hath seen God at any time," covers the ancient stories of so-called "Theophanies," and it coincides with rabbinical opinion that God was never imagined by the authors of the Old Testament to have been displayed to human vision except in a representative sense; but the entire burden of the New Testament may be summed up in the statement that God has revealed Himself to the world in Christ.

The subject of the Incarnation is treated in another essay, but some reference to it here is inevitable. When we are asked to think of God as manifesting Himself by assuming human nature as a vestment of visibility and an organ of active intercourse, we are constrained to recognise the sole fitness of a Person to represent Him who is invisible. But the more thoroughly this principle is appreciated the more inclined we are to ask, Is this manifestation to mankind in the midst of earthly time and on this insignificant globe a solitary and exceptional event, or may we regard it as a special and temporary form of a personal revelation which is eternal as God? It is difficult, and to many minds virtually impossible, to believe in such an event when regarded as a solitary and exceptional incident in the history of God's relations with the cosmos. There may be something exceptional in the state of mankind, which rendered a Divine manifestation in a finite form a wise and needful expedient; but the more we reflect upon the declared purpose and benefits of such a revelation, the more strongly it is borne in upon our minds that if needful here for redemptive or educational reasons, it must be needful wherever manlike, *i.e.* intelligent, moral beings exist throughout the universe. It

is indeed inconceivable that He who is for ever changeless should issue into visibility once only, and but for a few moments in the midst of eternal ages, and on one of the least of many millions of worlds. The difficulty may seldom be articulated, but it lies deep in many minds, and is one of the ill-defined causes of doubt which prevail among cultured men and women to-day.

But how differently we can view the Incarnation when illuminated by the thought that it is God's eternal nature to issue into knowable form, and that His self-expression is eternal! This is the thought which the proem to John's Gospel was evidently written to diffuse. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The main purport of this sublimely simple saying is that God was never without a self-expression. In Himself, *i.e.* in His self-conscious Life, God never was and never can become visible. We have no eyes which can read unuttered thought, or search the dark depths of another consciousness; nor can we conceive of any finite intelligence which could be capable of exploring the sanctuary of another self. But John while assuming that his readers are acquainted with Luke's story of the nativity, and including that earthly incident in the statement "the Word became flesh," yet views it in its eternal setting, and places it before the world as the coming into the region of our sense-perceptions and into the circle of our social life on earth of One who had been God's self-expression, God's Word, in that eternal past which includes what to our infirmity must be called "the beginning" when "God made the heavens and the earth."

Neither in his Gospel nor in his 1st Epistle does John affect to tell us or even to know what the Logos Form was prior to the Incarnation, and in relation to the universe at large, but his language distinctly attributes personality to the Logos. Other interpretations are offered, but they are very superficial, and fail to satisfy the conditions of a sound

exegesis.[1] The least unsatisfactory of these, and the only one which can be noticed here, accounts for the description of Christ as the Word become flesh, by stating that all God's earlier messages which had come to men as law and prophecy were summed up in Jesus as a living messenger who is thus constituted the living truth of God. There is beauty and truth in this proposed explanation. It is quite scriptural, but it is only a fragment of John's thought. It leaves out of account John's eternal prospect, which includes not only man's tuition, but man's creation and the creation of the cosmos, and melts away into the haze where thoughts of time and temporal succession are lost. It offers no interpretation of the fact that the Word is declared by John to have been already existent when the "beginning" is reached by human imagination. It fails to deal with the statement that all things came into existence through Him. If this had been all that John wanted to say, the world would never have had those marvellous chapters which have had such an immeasurable influence on philosophy as well as on theology for so many centuries. Some of John's sentences may be attenuated to this meagre meaning, but when all are fairly read together, they exhibit a Word who did not at first become personal in Christ; not an impersonal message embodied in a personal messenger, but a living One of whom it can be said historically, "and the Life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." The "life" thus manifested in time to the apostles is the Word which was with God, and "was God."

Such language must transcend our exposition, for it contains a thought so vast and many-sided that its utterance inevitably becomes paradoxical. It cannot, however, be called obscure. A word or discourse is justly termed a

[1] Note D, p. 62.

thought because it is an uttered thought, yet there is a sense in which we can distinguish between the utterance and the thought uttered. So the Logos may be spoken of in one clause as only "with God" and in the next as God. The doctrine is that the Invisible God, to whose self-conscious life no man can penetrate, has never been without expression in a knowable personal form. This form is not another individual of a limited species collectively called God, but is God; so that the Word may be conceived of as for ever saying to the Universe, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. . . . I and My Father are One."

Into the innermost secrets of the Godhead we cannot hope to pass, nor can we ever speak of divine things in other than metaphorical language. Attempts to define the infinite, and to get behind the manifesting Word so as to apprehend the innermost relations of the Revealed One to the Revealer, have not helped the faith or enlightened the intellects of men. Hence I make no presumptuous effort to explain precisely how the living Word may constitute what philosophy desiderates as an objective for God which exists with Him and fulfils the conditions of Personality and Causality, without being separated from Him as one finite person is separated from another. It is inevitable that thought and language should prove unequal to such a task. Our nearest approach to success must lie in the use of anthropomorphic analogies, with a distinct proviso that they connote finite limitations which they are not intended to denote. When we speak of "another-than-self" for God, we are entitled to add that we do not mean another self in the sense of a second personal God, but something which corresponds to another self in the case of finite creatures. An eternal and self-existent person must contain in Himself what we can only find in other finite beings outside ourselves, or He cannot exist. But this is no disproof of His existence, it is only an admission that His nature must con-

tain a fulness which corresponds to at least dual personality in finite beings. Our conception of Space is that of measurable extension, but this is no evidence that space is not immeasurable or infinite. Our conception of Time is that of measurable duration, yet we cannot get rid of the idea of eternity, because our time imagery fails. When Mr. Spencer reaches the inevitable conclusion that there is an eternal and inexhaustible Force, he is obliged to insist that this force which persists is not the force we know, for among other reasons the laws of force as known to us absolutely require previous work done as the condition of activity. Hence, according to every philosophical analogy, it is certain that an Eternal and self-existent Person must if spoken of at all be spoken of in terms which, like those which refer to time and space and force, require to have their finite connotations denied.

Subject, therefore, to this explanation it appears that the Logos affirmed by John is an "other-than-self" for God, which satisfies all the requirements of the case as excellently stated by Dr. Martineau, and in a way which escapes all the fatal objections to his own conjectural *datum*. A self-existent person cannot be dependent on His own created objects for His personality. That which corresponds to an Objective for Him must belong to His own uncreated nature. Given, therefore, such an eternal self-expression as John declares, and the First Cause stands before our thought in complete and undivided unity.

In passing from this consideration of John's doctrine, as a solution of the problem of Divine Personality, to view it as supplementary to the Hebrew doctrine of Revelation, we enter a region where thought is less difficult, and where the language of Scripture is more varied and explicit. The inward or Godward relation of the Logos is more distinctly expressed in the Greek (*πρὸς τὸν θεόν*) than a translation can

show, but still it is not dealt with in a way to suggest that John was consciously dealing with the psychological problem. But the outward and manward, or more broadly the creatureward relations of the eternal Word are dwelt upon as an integral part of the Christian revelation. He is the "effulgence" of God's glory, "the very image of His substance," and God has spoken to us in Him. Thus the Logos dwelt with God as form dwells with substance, and as the visible presentment of a man dwells with the man and is the man, and though the man is not merely what we see, yet we know him, and can come to him in no other way. One of the most beautiful and simple of scriptural metaphors is disclosed to English readers by the revised translation of Rev. xxi. 23. Speaking of the future city of the saints, John writes: "For the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb." As translated in the Authorised Version, the verse suggested that God and the Lamb were two distinct light-givers; but when John's distinction between the light and the luminary is uncovered, we see that every gleam of radiance flows from the one eternal and inapproachable source in God who is Light, but that this sole light is enshrined for modulated diffusion in Christ, so that all illumination reaches the inhabitants of the city through Him. This answers to all the language which speaks of God as "in Christ," and it beautifully expresses the truth that the Logos is God's necessary self-manifestation—God's medium of self-revelation to the universe.

We are tempted perhaps by philosophic habit, or by contempt for idolatry, to exhaust our powers of analysis in stripping the idea of God of everything which limits Him within the outlines of a form. But what is our reward? Is it not that we find God reduced to a mere negation of finite qualities without a residuum of reality? By such a cold abstraction religious yearning is mocked. Our hearts would embrace a person, but are chilled by a white cloud which

vanishes into nothingness. We have created a vacuum and called it God, and neither in the heavens above us to-day nor in the ages of futurity, can we hope for anything like that beatific vision of the Living God for which the soul pants in the arid wilderness of speculation.

Such feelings are not peculiar to any individual or class. Looking back on the history of religion we see how powerfully the yearning for some objective form has operated. The tendency to idolatry has been practically universal. Within historic times it has defied the clearest teachings of Theism, and has survived, or revived, in spite of indignation and contempt. The iconoclastic Buddha has become an image. Image-worship prevailed in Israel for centuries after the prophets wrote their scathing denunciations. In large portions of Christendom image-worship and the adoration of the Host almost supersede spiritual worship, and the visible priest takes the place of an unseen Christ. Even Positivism follows the same course, and assists its worship of idealised Man by portraits of canonised men. Such facts as these prove that the craving for Form is ineradicable. Men cannot worship Plato's Ideas or Aristotle's Mind. From such metaphysical figments the Stoics fled to Nature and adored the universal Reason as expressed in the visible cosmos. Thus Pantheism, which assumes such airs of superiority to "anthropomorphic" Theism, is a last and most extreme illustration of man's demand for form. Its most fascinating thought is that the cosmos is the one but manifold image of the invisible, the vestment and self-expression of God.

The universality and power of this craving for form forbids us to treat it as a contemptible infirmity. We shall be wiser to respect it as the natural demand of finite minds, and so inquire whether it cannot have some legitimate satisfaction which does not involve idolatry. Readers of the Bible owe much of their abhorrence of idolatry to the iconoclastic zeal of the prophets, and the stringent prohibi-

tion of image-making by the Jewish law. Yet no one can deny that, according to the Old Testament, God condescends to meet man's craving for Form to assist his idea of God. The old "Theophanies," the cloud of glory, and prophetic dreams and visions, are all examples of this condescension. The curtained space in the Temple, with a seat on which no visible shape rested, helped to focalise men's thoughts; and even the act of turning towards the sanctuary when praying afar off, must have saved many from the sense of vagueness and unreality which thousands now complain of when trying to commune with a silent and shapeless Omnipresence. Coming to the New Testament we find idolatry still denounced as a sin; yet the Incarnation is placed before us as God's provision for man's need, and Christ is distinctly declared to be the Image of the Invisible God.

Wherein, then, lies the folly and criminality of idolatry, and how can it be distinguished from the worship of Christ? The answer is perfectly clear and adequate. Idolatry cannot be wrong merely because an image is a form which helps to express and show forth a thought, but because it is an expression of man's own thought of God, and is not God's self-expression to man. It is the symbol of an idea, and therefore a word; but it is not God's word; it is not God's answer to man's inquiry, but man's poor and illusory effort to answer himself. Human nature is mocked and deluded when induced to invent, or to accept what other men have invented. As an image of God, it makes little difference whether the image be carved in stone, draped in poetry, or coldly outlined in a proposition. In any case, the man-made image is only an unauthenticated guess which may have little or no likeness to the Divine Truth. Man's god-making, whether literary, artistic, or logical, is to be refused as a pretended portrait of an unseen Being. But none the less it is true that, without an image of some kind, no man can think of God. The Formless Void of dialectics

is no more God than is a figure sculptured in marble. It is more truly Not-Being than Being. We can no more truly reach God by analysis than by imagination. The only conceivable satisfaction of our intellectual and affectional thirst for a living God, is some living Image which God Himself supplies.

In substance, these considerations are of universal validity. Man's sensuous nature may demand an Incarnation, while creatures of finer constitution may be able to discern things and persons which elude our faculties; but as we have seen in dealing with Hebrew Theism, the Infinite Mind must be inscrutable to the loftiest created intelligence until He manifests Himself. Thus a Divine Word is the only conceivable link between the infinite and the finite. The first step towards communion must be God's, and John fills the gap which yawns in every non-Christian system of Theism by declaring that God has never been without a Living Self-expression.

3. The absolute necessity for an Objective Form for the Revelation of Invisible Personality must not tempt us to exaggerate its efficiency. Let us also confess that there is a knowledge of Persons, which Form, whether conceived of as a material figure or an intellectual expression, cannot convey. The Love which is not a mere passionate desire, finds that the most intimate communion which is possible between human beings is still a remote intercourse. There is still a gulf fixed which neither beholder can cross. In supreme hours, such as come with great perils, or in the chamber of death, we look into the faces of beloved ones and yearn for a sight of the hidden life. We hear their words, but they sound like voices from afar. In times of trouble when comforters visit us, we know that they cannot penetrate to the innermost secret of our sorrow. In times of misjudgment we long to lay bare our true selves, but

words fail, explanations darken, even tears misrepresent, and we know ourselves unknown. "Self-expression" is, indeed, the most difficult of all the arts. The highest poetry is a failure to the poet, and all preaching is a failure to the prophetic soul—

> "For words, like Nature, half reveal
> And half conceal the Soul within."

The greater a man is, the more difficult it becomes to find language for his inspiration, and to show himself aright to his fellows. With fuller knowledge and loftier aims, his methods of work must of necessity be perplexing and often inexplicable to others. Reverential sympathy may trust his wisdom and goodness while labouring for remote objects, but the multitude he strives to benefit are likely to regard him with suspicion, and his ways with contempt. Is not this a partial interpretation of the divine sorrow which is frequently affirmed by the prophets, "My people have not known me"? Is it not also an interpretation of Christ's plaint to His disciple, "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know Me, Philip"? The alien and unfit saw Christ, and in John's phrase they also saw and heard and handled the Word of Life; yet these phenomena conveyed to them no Truth, and made not manifest the Life enshrined within. The chosen few walked and talked with the Word Incarnate, yet after three years they were still incapable of reading Him as He and they desired. The finite form and human attributes which, according to Christian Theism, were indispensable vehicles of revelation, were also hindrances and limitations. There were truths which, as Christ told Peter, "flesh and blood" could not reveal. For the Infinite Lord the "form of a servant" was in some respects a disguise, and the early removal of that material object was as essential as its temporary use. Hence it was that Christ said to His friends, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Paraclete will not come to you. . . .

When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth. . . . He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine and shall declare it unto you."[1]

Until the inherent difficulty of self-revelation is apprehended, we have no clue to the significance of Christ's teaching respecting the Spirit. Even those who take a strictly humanitarian view of Christ's person must confess that for Him, as at least a peerless son of man, the task of showing Himself was singularly difficult. But how supremely difficult appears this task if, with John, we believe that Christ knew Himself to be not merely a man, but a man and something more,—a man in whom the Father dwelt for revelation! It may for a moment be thought that the difficulty would be lessened by the possession of extraordinary powers; but this relief is illusory. Finite minds can only comprehend finite symbols, and the modes of communication open for God's use are limited by the inexorable necessity of using a language which His creatures have learned. He must use an imperfect medium of communication, or else create new faculties of which we have no conception. How, then, can we estimate the difficulty of bringing even the most intimate associates of Christ to see that the Divine Spirit was present in the human Friend they revered, but were religiously afraid to worship? Without endangering that loyalty to God for which He had chosen them, and which He had come, not to weaken, but to nourish, He could only lead them little by little into the consciousness of a divine companionship; nor could He assert His own Divinity in words until they were thus prepared to believe the amazing truth. When this dawned upon them they were in danger of cleaving to the human Form with an exaggerated affection. The veil needed to be rent that they might see the Life of which it was a vestment. The bodily form also needed to be withdrawn that they might live in ceaseless communion

[1] John xvi. 7–14.

with One who was confined to no human temple, and was as truly everywhere as in the body which He had made His vestment for a season.

In reading Christ's words about the Spirit, we therefore need to regard them as the language of One whose purpose in life was to reveal Himself to a world, which was dark and devil-haunted for lack of the Truth hidden in His own self-consciousness. If any reader shrinks from such a standpoint as beyond the reach of present faith, let him remember that, rightly or wrongly, this was John's standpoint, and therefore his interpreters must take their places at least hypothetically by his side, or can never hope to know what he meant to teach.

Viewing Christ thus, we see that He had to impart ideas which no language spoken among men could embody in their wholeness. He was obliged to give broken lights or leave men in darkness. His disciples thought of God as Invisible, and He must confirm their belief; yet must He also convince them that the Father was showing His mind and heart; was showing Himself in and through the Son who had come into their midst. He must prepare them for His removal from their midst as one who walked and talked and lived within the range of sense-perception. Yet He must assure them that this removal did not mean absence. He must convince them that He, the Jesus Christ of Nazareth, would not be holden of death, but be raised up to a glorified life of intimate union with the Father; and yet He must make it clear that while, in the terms of a poor earthly analogy, He sat enthroned above the highest heavens, He would be as truly their Master and Friend, and as truly the hearer of their words and reader of their thoughts, as while He dwelt as a brother in their midst. Hence we find in the profoundest and most spiritual discourses reported in John's Gospel, phrases which are as picturesquely anthropomorphic as any in the Old Testament. "I go to prepare a place for

you." "I go unto the Father." "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth." "I will not leave you desolate, I will come unto you." "A little while and the world beholdeth Me no more; but ye behold Me." "If a man love Me, he will keep My word: and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." "These things have I spoken unto you while yet abiding with you. But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring to remembrance all that I have said unto you."

If we take these, with many similar utterances, and attempt to harmonise them literally, we find contradictory absurdities. If we try to analyse them, and then so recompose their parts as to frame a doctrine of three persons, with separate offices and functions, no clear division can be made. In some places the Spirit appears to be a person; in others, an almost passive influence, proceeding from the Father; in others, as a subordinate being who has no spontaneity of action, no claim to personal recognition, and no function but to magnify the Son. The same things are attributed to Father, Son, and Spirit. Christ will come and dwell with His disciples. Christ and the Father will come together as though two invisible guests. The Spirit also is to abide in us for ever, while Christ goes away to the Father. These are a few of the confusions which abound in the letter, and they are enough to kill all faith if criticised without sympathetic insight into Christ's purpose and the inherent difficulties of His task. But with this clue to guide us, the meaning is not indistinct. Christ does not reduce the Godhead into a species which consists of three individuals, with separate departmental offices, and are One God only as collective humanity is man. Nor does Christ darken counsel by loose statements in which names are interchanged without reason. He meets human infirmity of thought by language

which enables us to think of the Father in heaven as also here on earth, and in possession of the innermost sanctuary of our personal life. God comes to us objectively in Christ, and thus sets a living image before mankind which gives a definite and intelligible idea of Himself. This image is as truly, if not as vividly, before men's minds to-day in the recorded life as it was during the period of fleshly residence on earth; and in seeing the significance of this objective revelation we see into the heart of the Invisible Father. But the record of this objective self-expression does not suffice. We need inspiration to appreciate its riches of knowledge. We crave to know also that the Being whose glory passed before the first disciples is accessible to us, and that we are not living out of His ken and care. Hence the doctrine of the Spirit has been given to teach that God is not only transcendent, but immanent. He not only came once, but is always coming; yet is never coming, because always here. He who made us has access to our minds not only through the avenues of sense; He can enter by a door no physical hand can open; He can speak without moving waves of air to break upon our ears. He does not miraculously dispense with our ordinary faculties for the discernment of truth, but He has power to quicken spiritual energy, to add the mystic music of a spiritual voice to the words which would otherwise be like those of a deceased author. Christ is God's self-expression, but the Spirit is His self-impartation; He is God in living touch with us, and helping our infirmities, so that we may have purified eyes to see the things He has revealed, and be strengthened with might in the inner man as by a new breath from the Creator's mouth, so that we may be able to comprehend His love, and do the things He has commanded. Helped by this never-absent Friend, we see God in nature as far as nature can declare Him; we also see God's thought in the Scriptures, and, above all, God's character in Christ. Thus Inspiration is the comple-

ment of Revelation; and the Love of God, commended to the world by the life and dying of the Word made flesh, is shed abroad in each believing heart by the Spirit.

4. Christianity inherited from Judaism its profoundly ethical idea of God; but this goodly heritage came burdened with certain problems which the Old Testament never formally discussed, though it thrust them into prominence, and contained in at least an implicit form most important clues to their solution. We have seen that devout Israelites firmly believed in the immutability of the divine character and the inviolable sanctity of moral law; yet they also believed in the efficacy of repentance, in the possibility of forgiveness, the remission of penalty, and in the ultimate deliverance of the godly from the destructive consequences of sin. But these beliefs were not intellectually harmonised. Each belief was held fast as a doctrine of revelation; each was found satisfactory to the reason and heart while viewed apart; but speculative attempts at conciliation seem to have been arrested by a religious reverence for God's supremacy, coupled with a restful intuition that the Judge of all the earth must needs do right.

It has often been said, and notably by the late Dr. Hatch, that it was Greek philosophy which forced upon the Church the twofold problem of the relation of the idea of forgiveness to that of law; and the relation of the conception of a Moral Governor to that of free will.[1] But this is a most misleading statement. Both these are problems raised by ethical Monotheism and peculiar to it, and were discussed between Jews and Christians before Greek philosophy exerted any appreciable effect on Christian thought. All the factors of the problem are prominent in the Old Testament, and their solution is the ethical *raison d'être* of Christianity. That Greek habits of thought forced the dis-

[1] *The Hibbert Lectures*, 1888, p. 226.

cussion of these problems in an apologetic and philosophic form upon the Church need not be questioned; but when this happened their solution had not to be invented, but only to be brought forth. It had already been provided in the teachings of Christ, and by Paul's interpretation of Christ's life and death.

The Greeks had no conception of a moral order centring in and administered by an Eternal and Righteous God. They had the conception of an order to which gods and men were subject, and by their highest minds this order was believed to be rational and therefore right; but the ethical content of this conception was exceedingly small. It was virtually the thought of an automatic Destiny, working out its necessary decrees without regard for man's inward life, and without anger or pity, approval or disapproval for men or gods. The wicked man had therefore cause to fear the Nemesis which would bring to him the natural consequences of his deeds; the good man might hope to reap some benefits resultant from his virtue: but the man who regretted his misdeeds could never imagine that Heaven would forgive his crime, or cut the threads of fate for his relief. In such an order the problems now before us had no possible place. A cosmos thus dominated by an impersonal principle of necessity is not a moral order, and it leaves no room for one to be developed. In such a cosmos, whether conceived in a materialistic or pantheistic sense, all things work out an endless continuity of sequences without possibility of choice within or control from above. There is no Moral Governor, no government, no free will, consequently there can be no sin, and therefore neither forgiveness nor punishment, but only necessary action followed by necessary effects. In such a cosmos strictly ethical problems cannot arise. Only in a cosmos created and governed by a Person can any collision between law

and forgiveness, or moral agents and a Moral Governor, have any imaginable place.

Happily the same idea of God which renders these ethical problems possible, also paves the way for their solution. As a preliminary consideration it enables us to affirm, that a Personal Creator cannot be powerless to act on the universe for the purpose of giving effect to His ethical judgments. He is not only the First Cause in the order of temporal succession, but the permanent principle of causality: He is the continuous and persistent Cause of all movement and life, and can touch the sequence of events in the physical realm, so as to bend and direct their currents by methods of which man's volitional control of nature is a type. Hence there is no such incompatibility between salvation and natural law in a Theocentric Cosmos, as there is, or would be, in a godless world. Unless restrained by some immutable ethical principle, God can avert the natural consequences of human transgression. The fact that potentially God can do these things is not only the antecedent condition of any ethical question coming before our minds, but when the question has come it compels us to deal with it on purely ethical grounds.

Again, a Personal Creator and Ruler, who issues and administers Laws which include punitive sanctions, may conceivably annul or alter these laws in the exercise of the same authority which imposed them. Here again the question raised is purely ethical, and is one which pagan philosophy, whether ancient or modern, is peculiarly incompetent to discuss, because it can only be dealt with even hypothetically in relation to a Theocentric Cosmos in which the will of a Personal God is free, and His power supreme. It touches the immutability of God's character, the inviolability of His word, the stability of His purpose, and the moral continuity of His work. But in relation to

each of these points the problem presupposes God's existence, and His power to please Himself.

How, then, does Christian Theism deal with this strictly ethical problem? In respect of the law, considered as a Jewish code or series of codes, Christianity denies that God ever tied His own hands by any enactments. It affirms that the Judaic dispensation was national and transitory, and that its laws were not universal or perpetual expressions of God's will. It distinguishes between Law as an eternal and necessary order, which even God cannot alter or relax without unrighteousness, and a particular set of regulative commands. The Jewish law in this latter sense had become almost a fetich to the Pharisees, and Paul's treatment of it as a local and temporary instrument of discipline for an immature people, excited their vehement anger. But Paul urged with irresistible force, that a legal code was powerless to produce righteousness, *i.e.* to carry men into perfect conformity with that eternal law of righteousness of which it was a partial and provisional expression. He insisted that although God's will for men is changeless, His method of moral culture may change, as parental discipline changes when children's ideas of right and wrong become developed, and the higher motives of honour and affection come into play. We can have no sympathy, then, with the obstructionist pride of the Jews, who thought that the Mosaic dispensation was as sacred and unalterable as the eternal principles of moral government. It has become plain, not only to Christians, but to many Agnostics, that conduct which is actuated by considerations of personal security or advantage, or of legal obligation, is ethically less pure than conduct which springs from a free spirit of love. On this point Paul's discussions anticipated all that is most beautiful in Mr. Herbert Spencer's *Data of Ethics*, in which he adopts the Christian ideal of conduct, while emu-

lating the ancient alchemists by a scientific endeavour to transmute the base metal of selfishness into the fine gold of altruism. Paul found in the love of God in Christ an element of such potent virtue, that it could transform human character by changing the thoughts of the heart and creating an enthusiasm for the Father's kingdom and glory. Hence he was able to say that for transmuted character the Jewish law was obsolete. But he always insisted that this change of dispensation was in the interests of righteousness, and not, as the Jews supposed, a specious anarchism.

No fair-minded reader of the New Testament can regard Christianity as a surrender of the Divine will, or an abdication of the duties of a Moral Governor. The ancient moral law was translated into an exemplary life by Christ. His Life is an interpretation of that eternal law of Love which was less vividly expressed in the Decalogue, and His actual character is fairer than any ethical ideal which the best of men had previously conceived. The injunction to follow Christ is not an imperious mandate, but it includes every "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not" in the practical ethics of Moses. Likeness to Christ is held up before men as the goal of individual aspiration, and those who have no such aspiration are declared to be none of His, and are forbidden to expect a place in His kingdom. The ethical standard, therefore, is not lowered but raised; the environment of human life is widened from a nation to the universe, and from this brief span of existence to eternity; but God's inexorable hatred of sin, and His purpose to exterminate it, is declared to be the chief reason for Christ's advent and death.

But granting this inflexible ethical intent, it is demanded, How can the doctrine of forgiveness be reconciled with the divine maintenance of an eternal and immutable Moral Order? The answer to this inquiry is written large in the New Testament. It is one of Christ's most fundamental

doctrines, that under certain definite conditions, forgiveness is not a breach, but is itself an integral and essential part of the moral order. By His personal example and by His verbal teachings, Christ thus elevated forgiveness into a supreme duty. There are, according to Christ, only two things which God will not forgive, namely, the sin against the Holy Spirit, which cannot here be discussed, and the sin of refusing to forgive them that sin against us. "If ye forgive not . . . neither will your heavenly Father forgive you." In His model prayer He teaches us to imprecate vengeance on ourselves if unmerciful, by saying, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." Pardon is therefore not viewed by Christ as moral laxity, or as a departure from the strict course of righteousness, but as a primary law of moral life, and as a fundamental principle in the society He came to found, on a declaration of God's righteousness in "passing by iniquity, transgression, and sin."

This law of forgiveness is strictly conditioned in Christian ethics by genuine repentance. Among men the reality of repentance can seldom be verified; but so urgent is Christ to prevent any denial of mercy to the truly penitent, that He throws all the risk of error into the scale against suspicion, and commands us to forgive a brother as often as he may turn and only say, "I repent." God's forgiveness is not to be obtained without a repentance which is real in His unerring sight; but allowing for the difference between fallibility and infallibility, God's forgiveness is represented to us as granted on the same condition as man's is enjoined.

To those who look on conduct as consisting of outward and visible acts, this inclusion of forgiveness among the virtues must appear anomalous. But the ethical glory of Christian Theism lies in the fact that it carries our minds into a more purely spiritual region, and bids us look, not only on acts, but on motives and on states of mind, which are

infinitely more important; because they are the hidden springs whence proceed the issues of love, and because they are, indeed, the realities with which ethical science, as distinct from legislative authority, is mainly concerned. Christ carries out to its full development the ancient truth—As a man "thinketh in his heart, so is he." Hence, in His judgment of men, now and hereafter, He is a discerner of "the secrets of men." Mere outward rectitude cannot satisfy Him, nor can outward acts of wrong render Him unjust to one who has erred through ignorance or weakness, or through direful temptation. In the superficial judgment which regards action only, repentance appears valueless and inoperative, for it cannot alter the past, nor can it heal the wounds which sin has made, nor stay the external plague of corruption, disorder, and disaster which transgression has caused. But in the inner realm, where ethical distinctions have validity, the significance of repentance is inestimable. True repentance means the production of an entirely new mind, and with it a complete change in the man's relations with the eternal moral order. Before repentance the transgressor was an anarchist, a revolter, and disturber of the world's peace—he was like a broken bone in the social body, a discordant voice in the great chorus;—but after repentance he reveres, and yearns to conform himself to the law of righteousness; and this man of renovated thought, affection, and volition is like a bone reset, a voice attuned to the concerted harmony of life. To refuse to recognise this change of nature and relations is therefore essentially unjust, and the treatment of the new heart as if it were an enemy to righteousness is an offence which a holy God cannot commit, and cannot condone in His creatures.

In a mechanical cosmos, if such terms can be combined, a new heart counts for as little as the cry of a drowning man; but in a Father's estimation it counts for more than many stars. It by no means follows, however, that because for-

giveness has thus a primary place in an ethical order, it must include an immediate, or total removal of all the grievous consequences of wrong-doing. Having seen that God's power must be regarded as sufficient to give effect to His judgments, we are compelled to exclude dynamical considerations from this higher stage of the discussion, but there are benignant reasons why even repentance should not be allowed to cancel the connection between sowing and reaping. Forgiveness recognises the veracity of the new mind, it releases the individual from the pangs of perpetual condemnation, it assures him of renewed trust in his rightness of spirit, and thus throws open the door of fellowship with God, and co-operation in His service with all who live in loyalty to Him. But forgiveness is not inconsistent with chastisement for the deepening of right impressions on the individual, and for the instruction of his acquaintances; nor does it require or permit such an interference with the natural order of physical causation and social sequence as would encourage procrastination and conceal the enormity of sin, and so screen the pardoned individual at the cost of undermining the foundations of the moral schoolhouse in which we have been placed. Hence, while showing the righteousness of forgiveness, Christ teaches also the mercy of severity; and among the many rays of ethical truth which shine from the Cross, this comes to us, That God will spare no anguish to Himself or His sons, which may be necessary to conserve and solemnise the sanctity of Law.

At this point our thoughts approach that mystery of Atonement which is dealt with by another pen, but no statement of Christian Theism can omit to say that, as in His life, so in that Death, which was its crowning action, Christ was the Self-expression of God. The Cross is the interpretation to humanity of that Name, which had been written long before in wonderful, but still weak Hebrew words. "The Lord, a God full of compassion and gracious,

slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty."

Thus understood, the Cross becomes an assurance, that the Creator is faithful to all the moral responsibilities of Creation, and that He Himself is in eternal harmony with the moral order in which He disciplines mankind. He made men, foreseeing and permitting the tragical development of their free experiments in self-direction. He knew that generations of erring men would hand down to posterity a woeful heritage of weakened moral power, evil example, entangling circumstance, and bewildering theories of life; and we are taught by Christ that in all this God found, not a reason for dooming all His erring creatures to perpetual ruin, but an irresistible appeal to His justice and compassion; and a cry for help, which a faithful Creator could not disregard. Like as a father pities the children he has begotten into a world of pain and strife—pities their frailty, their ignorance, their inevitable mistakes; and while blaming their wilful faults, yet feels intense compassion, because nothing is so sad as sin: like as a wise father chastens an erring son because he loves him, and strives by every method in his power to awaken better thoughts, greets the first movements of repentance with delight, fosters them with words of sympathetic trust in their sincerity: like as a good earthly father, when he sees retribution falling, stoops to bear the son's burden of shame, and will often sacrifice both health and wealth, and even lay down his life to save the contrite prodigal from ruin;—even so the Cross teaches us that the Father in heaven pities His children, and takes upon Himself the burden and sacrifice of their salvation.

The Cross is thus the living synthesis of Law and Forgiveness. It is the conciliation of the ancient paradox, "A just God and a Saviour." It is God fulfilling the eternal law of Love towards His creatures, and so constraining all who

duly apprehend the truth to love Him because He has first loved us. In loving Him, men learn to love His law, and to hate the things which grieve His Spirit and disturb the order of His world. Thus Christian Theism is not only an ethical Monotheism, but is also a regenerative force, to bring the torn and distracted race of man into happy relations with the universal order, which ethically binds the Creator and His creatures into one family. It is therefore no vain thing to anticipate that, as Christian Theism becomes the light and power of human society, the world will be filled with the music of concerted lives, and all the earth be hallowed as one mansion in the Father's House.

NOTE A (p. 5)

Having referred to the work of the Higher Criticism, without endorsing or disputing its validity, it may not be superfluous to say that I regard it with respect and hopefulness when conducted in a scientific spirit. As to its legitimacy there can be no question. Every village dame who reads Deut. xxxiv. becomes, unconsciously, a "higher critic," by perceiving that Moses could not have written the account of his own death, or the eulogy which declares, "And there hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses." Those who would limit the analysis of the Old Testament within the limits of such a reader's acumen must be very few, and may be disregarded. The same law which justifies belief in a later authorship of this fragment must be universally applicable, and therefore the claim of critics to pursue their calling is indisputable. No rational person can imagine that the religious value of Deuteronomy is diminished by the discovery that Moses did not write the last chapter, and only a feeble faith can anticipate with alarm the ultimate results which analysis may yield. Strong faith will always say, Let us know, if possible, the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; that we may adjust our thoughts to the facts, and not tamper with facts to spare a little mental agitation. All this seems to be almost axiomatic. But between the cordial admission of

the principle and an immediate or wholesale approval of all the handiwork which is offered as its legitimate fruitage, there is an appreciable difference. When inferences drawn from probable, not to speak of improbable, data, are treated as certainties, when guesses are given as "results," and when intuition and "fancy" take the place of proof, scepticism is not unjustifiable. May I add, that if specialists in criticism could be a little more patient with those who desire nothing but the truth, but like their truths verified, some heart-burning might be spared, and religion would suffer less from the recriminations of different orders of servants. Nothing is so unbecoming in a critic as the assumption that agreement with himself is a standard by which scholarship, insight, and courage are to be measured. Professor Cheyne has done much to infuse a religious spirit into English criticism, but his book on *The Founders of Old Testament Criticism* is not pleasant reading, because marred by the fault just mentioned. I deprecate his disparaging comments on Professor Driver and other fellow-workers who have sufficient "caution," "moderation," and "sobriety" not to follow him implicitly. Such comments are neither fitted to soothe their feelings nor likely to augment public confidence. Professor Cheyne pleads for a free use of the "historic imagination" in conjunction with the critical faculty. He cannot even see that the word "fanciful," as applied to one of his hypotheses by Professor Robertson Smith, expresses a good reason for its non-acceptance. But while it may be conceded that without imagination there can be "no vivifying the lifeless conclusions of a cold criticism," a sharp distinction must be drawn between the legitimate exercise of this faculty for the literary grouping and arraying of historical material, and the unscientific use of it for the provision of facts.

At the present moment it would be impossible to print in many colours a Resultant Old Testament which would represent a general consensus of critical opinion, or have any pretensions to be regarded as final. Until critics and archæologists can agree respecting the antiquity of literary culture and some other fundamental questions, no theory of the Old Testament can be wisely accepted as more than a mere working hypothesis. Theologians and preachers are not free to run the risk of building upon sandy surmises. They ought to be, and I believe that most of them are, prepared to welcome and build upon all historical facts as these are ascertained and verified; but in their recognition of these

facts they will certainly prefer to be guided by men who do not offer them complex, fanciful, and imaginative theories as scientific results.

In this connection the history of New Testament criticism is instructive. For many years Lightfoot, Westcott, and other defenders of the traditional view of the Christian documents were slighted as men who lacked "the historical sense" and the "highest scholarship," and even as "endowed advocates" of ecclesiastical traditions; and Christian ministers were openly charged by Professor Huxley and many others with ignorance, or worse with dishonesty, in concealing from the public the "results of critical scholarship"; yet to-day these results are given up. The present position is well summed up by a candid though reluctant witness: "There was a time—the great mass of the public is still living in such a time—in which people felt obliged to regard the oldest Christian literature, including the New Testament, as a tissue of deception and falsifications. That time is past. . . . The oldest literature of the Church is, in the main points and in most of its details, from the point of view of literary history, veracious and trustworthy. In the whole New Testament there is probably but a single writing which can be called, in the strictest sense of the word, pseudonymous, the Second Epistle of Peter."[1]

I agree with those who deprecate a hasty conclusion that Old Testament criticism will suffer a similar humiliation. There was an anti-Christian animus in the criticism of the New Testament which cannot be discovered among the foremost Old Testament critics in England and America, and is comparatively rare in Germany; and this fact adds immensely to the value of any judgments which find general acceptance. It must also be remembered that the historical problem now before the Church is vaster and more complex than the one just closed. The Christian Scriptures came into existence in a literary age and under circumstances of international publicity. Within a few years the chief documents were published in many parts of the world, and in various languages. They passed into the hands of numerous, remote, and independent organised communities, and in the course of a few generations they became the subject of polemical criticism and discourse. These facts have no parallel in the case of the Old Testament, which carries us

[1] Professor Harnack, *The Chronology of Ancient Christian Literature down to the Time of Eusebius*. Quoted and translated by Dr. Sanday in the *Guardian* for January 20th, 1897.

back into vast and dimly lighted periods, of which even the external history is obscure, and into circumstances which render traditional views less likely to be accurate. But when due allowance has been made for these differences, it remains true that the fallibility of criticism has been impressively exhibited. It is gratifying that a brilliant group of English critics has triumphed over many boastful and disdainful opponents; but they owe their success very largely to the opportune discovery of new documentary evidence. Hence it behoves us to avoid dogmatic conclusions respecting the Old Testament, which may be contradicted by archæological research. Records of the past, more precious than gold or silver, are being sought for, and are likely to be found, in Egypt, Assyria, Palestine and adjacent lands. A few years may witness a final confirmation of some conjectural reconstructions of Hebrew history; but it is not impossible that some traditional views may have a surprising vindication. In any case archæology must have the last word, and that last word may not be heard by this generation.

NOTE B (p. 9)

In bringing the Psalter[1] down to a late age, Professor Cheyne was confronted with those anthropomorphic features which have often been regarded as proofs of barbarism; but concerning this he well observes, "The freedom with which the psalmists use anthropomorphic, or let us say mythic expressions, is a consequence of the sense of religious security which animates them. They have no expectation of being taken literally: they know that each member of the Church has a key to their meaning."

NOTE C (p. 10)

This anthropomorphic language is so extreme in some recent works that it almost amounts to a scientific defence of those primitive superstitions which personified the objects of nature. Thus, in a work which contains a laudatory preface by Mr. Grant Allen, we are told, "Trees . . . are sentient beings, very much alive to the circumstances of their surroundings. It is all very well to ascribe this energy to the action and reaction of temperature, sunlight, and rain-

[1] *Origin of the Psalter*, p. 286.

fall . . . but a purely mechanical process is impossible. . . . When a man gains some particular object for which he has long been striving, we call him persevering, energetic, and industrious; and when a tree does the same we can hardly do less than give it due credit. . . . Of the five senses they (plants) possess three, feeling, taste, and smell . . . admitting that these senses are possessed . . . must we not conclude that they are discriminately used?"[1] The argument thus indicated by an ardent evolutionist may be profitably read in arrest of the scorn cast on anthropomorphic conceptions of the First Cause. The scientific repudiation of mechanical evolution as inadequate to account for the phenomena of a tropical forest, is equally valid as applied to the Cosmos. It is a confession that evolution implies intelligent purpose and volition. Hence, if we deny a personal First Cause and Intelligent Evolver of Nature, we are compelled to attribute man-like qualities to inanimate things. Lest Mr. Rodway's language should be thought unusually imaginative, here is a sentence which I have just met with in an elementary *Text-Book of Agricultural Botany*: "Each organism, whether animal or vegetable, will pursue a similar course of conduct, using different means to attain the same end."

NOTE D (p. 37)

The interpretation of the Logos doctrine criticised in the text has been well expounded by Dr. J. Drummond, whose close study of Alexandrian philosophy preserved him from the common fallacy of confounding John's doctrine with that of Philo.[2]

I have not attempted to discuss those theories which, with various modifications, treat John's Logos as the affirmation of a purely ideal pre-existence of Christ, because their adequate treatment would require more space than the entire essay now occupies. Some interpreters define the Logos as the sum of all God's thoughts, the fountain of all eternal wisdom and truth. Others narrow it down to God's ideal of manhood, which first found a perfect realisation in Christ. But, however phrased, such mystical conceptions are foreign to the sublimely simple thought of John, and cannot be fitted into a thorough and detailed exegesis of his prologue. Moreover, all these views are false to New Testament usage

[1] James Rodway, *In the Guiana Forest*, pp. 211–223.
[2] *Via, Veritas, Vita*, p. 307.

of the term Logos, and on this ground alone would have to be dismissed. This statement directly contradicts many writers whose names carry great weight, but I shall close this note by showing how arbitrary and uncritical are the grounds on which the conclusions of great philological authorities may sometimes be based. For this purpose I cannot do better than quote the dictum of Professor Max Müller, who thus writes: "This Greek word, whatever meaning was assigned to it by Christian thinkers, tells us in language that cannot be mistaken that it is a word and a thought of Greek workmanship. Whoever used it, and in whatever sense he used it, he had been under the influence of Greek thought, he was an intellectual descendant of Plato, Aristotle, or of the Stoics and Neo-Platonists, nay, of Anaxagoras and Heraclitus. To imagine that either Jews or Christians could adopt a foreign terminology without adopting the thoughts embedded in it, shows a strange misapprehension of the nature of language. . . . Why do we use a foreign word if not because we feel that the word, and the exact thought which it expresses, are absent from our own intellectual armoury?" [1]

Respecting this utterance, I venture to observe that a more misleading or inaccurate statement has seldom found its way into print through the bias or carelessness of a great scholar. The author entirely overlooks the fact that Logos found its way into Jewish use, not as a foreign word imported into Hebrew to supply a felt defect, or because "the precise word and the exact thought which it" expressed was absent from the intellectual armoury of the Jews, but as the best Greek equivalent which could be found for a Hebrew term which had to be translated if the "intellectual armoury" contained in the Old Testament was to be presented to the Greek-speaking world. Many generations before the Gospel of John was written, the LXX. version of the Old Testament determined the value of λόγος, in relation to Hebrew thought, by using it almost interchangeably with ῥῆμα to render the force of דָּבָר. It was an excellent word for this purpose; for even its secondary meanings (excepting only its later philosophical meaning) correspond with extraordinary accuracy to those of דָּבָר. Furthermore, it can, if needful, be demonstrated that when the Hebrew authors of the New Testament wrote in Greek for the diffusion of their ideas throughout the Gentile world, they followed the example of the LXX. translators in their usage of the term Logos. When John wrote his Gospel and Epistles this term must have long passed

[1] *Theosophy and Psychological Religion*, p. 380.

into currency in churches, and it implies no acquaintance with philosophy in the writer or in his readers.

Serious argument, however, is rather out of place in dealing with Professor Max Müller's dictum. Its quality may best be tried by applying it to two test cases. (1) In the enunciation of his philological law the Gifford lecturer resembled the New Testament writers in the fact that he was trying to express his ideas to foreigners, and also in the fact that in order to do so he adopted what is for himself "a foreign terminology." Will he, then, pay Englishmen the compliment of admitting that he did so because the "exact thoughts which it expresses" were "absent from" his "own intellectual armoury"? If not, how shall we apply his dictum to the apostles? (2) The New Testament has been translated into upwards of 300 languages. Have the translators adopted all the heathen ideas "embedded" in the foreign terminology they have used? If not, how shall we apply the new law to the Septuagint version, in which Logos appears some hundreds of times? Unfortunately the law so lucidly proclaimed in 1892 has been too often assumed in Biblical criticism, and pagan ideas have thus been read into the words of men who abhorred them. Christian theology has suffered much, and still suffers, from this subtle source of corruption, and the mischief recurs in every country to which missionaries are sent. They can only use the language of their hearers, and are sorely perplexed to find out ways of purging these terms of the false and often vile thoughts "embedded in them," and of gradually filling them with the ideas of Christ. That uncultured and prejudiced heathen peoples should misunderstand their foreign teachers is pardonable, but that one of the foremost scholars of our generation should elaborately justify their blunder leaves us divided between amazement and regret.

II

THE PERMANENT SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BIBLE

By EDWARD MEDLEY

II

The Permanent Significance of the Bible

Has the Bible outlived its welcome? Has it any longer a living message for mankind? Is it a force, once powerful, but now exhausted, to be examined with a merely antiquarian interest, as one might examine the literature of an extinct people, and picture to ourselves its ancient charm, but for us, here and now, a dead thing?

To hear some of the voices which are clamorous in the world, one might think that these questions must be answered in the affirmative. Already the Bible has been bowed off the active stage; its funeral oration has been pronounced, and all its doings are spoken of as being in the past tense. It has had its day, it is said; its sceptre has passed into hands more competent to present-day affairs; its kingdom has been given to another. This, and much else, is now being said; and yet when we have taken breath again, and begin to look round, this fact becomes clear, namely, that whilst the Bible has been submitted to the fiery ordeal of criticism, legitimate and illegitimate, ever since its Canon was finally settled, it yet lives and works with a sort of deathless energy.

Certainly no body of ancient literature has ever undergone a scrutiny so varied, so prolonged, and so penetrating as that which the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments have had to endure. Dates, authorship, subject-matter, history, morality, religious teaching, all these have been thrown with impartial hand into the crucible; whatever

has not in it an immortal principle ought by this time to have been consumed. Of this searching critical process we should not complain. It is everyway right that books, for which so much is claimed, should be tried in a manner that would be superfluous in the case of a humbler literature. If the Scriptures in their substance convey the mind of God to man, then our faith should be robust enough to see with equanimity their trial by fire. Of this we may be assured, nothing of permanent value will suffer abiding loss—whatever ultimately goes ought to go.

It should not be forgotten that criticism, not too friendly, has been invited by affirmations made on behalf of the Bible, which it does not seem to make for itself. Keen-eyed opponents have been supplied—gratuitously, it might be said—with material on which to exercise their skill by those who, if they love the Bible well, love it not too wisely. Thus it has been affirmed that Moses was the author of the entire Pentateuch, together, probably, with the Book of Job; that the Creation narratives of Genesis are scientifically accurate, anticipating to a nicety our latest discoveries. It has been stoutly declared that the prophetic books were written in their entirety by the great men whose names they bear, in each case the man being one, and his book one too. The headings of the psalms have been taken as authoritative, every psalm, for instance, attributed to David being from his pen. It has been urged that quotations which are attributed to names popularly accepted as the authors of them at the time a scripture was written, without doubt authoritatively declare who the real authors were. And, finally, as silencing every objection, the saying, "All scripture inspired of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," has been taken to mean that every jot and tittle of scripture, as we have it, is so inspired. It may be, but it is not there said.

These statements, and they might be indefinitely multiplied, have supplied only too abundant matter for unfriendly critics, who, in not a few instances, have deftly handled them as though they were integral parts of the original record; and the disproof of any one of them has been held to be tantamount to a disproof of Scripture itself. It is as though the defeat of volunteers, who, unasked, should have put on the uniform of the regular army, were held to be equivalent to a defeat of the army itself. In this way many sincere minds have been disturbed and distressed.

The disturbance and distress are greatly to be deplored, but surely no thoughtful mind can regret the process by which Scripture questions have been relieved of extraneous difficulties. It is a pure gain to have the field cleared of these most human encumbrances, for they have impeded the friends of the Bible, and have been a godsend to those who are hostile to it. The temper of critics, here and there, is strongly to be deprecated; but criticism, even of a drastic sort, may prove to be nothing else than a divine fire, with which God shall give public proof as to what has in it His own life and Spirit. Certainly, in spite of all the conflict which has raged round the Bible, it has been of all books the most abidingly significant.

Whilst the Scriptures were in the very process of formation, the early parts profoundly influenced the men who, in the providence of God, were to become the writers of the later pages. That is, a mere fragment of the Bible was a potent element in the education and spiritual preparation of the great men who are acknowledged to be amongst the foremost minds of the race. The earlier writers were evidently well acquainted with the fragments of Scripture already in existence, whilst they, in their turn, helped to mould the writers of a later generation. Thus, if we take a book like that of the prophet Hosea, the date of which

can be defined with tolerable precision, we find that he was evidently acquainted with many of the facts recorded in the Pentateuch (though we cannot say that he possessed it in the form we have it). He imports into his work sayings from the pen of Amos, whilst he himself is used as a quarry by Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah. These men, forming a group pre-eminent for mental capacity, moral fervour, and spiritual insight, did not think it beneath them to embody in their wonderful pages quotations from the ruder prophet of early Israel. And when from the Old Testament we turn to the New, the same fact is in evidence. References to Hosea, direct and indirect, are found both in the Gospels and the Epistles. Paul can find nowhere else words better fitted to express his thought than those of a man who lived and wrought in the eighth century before Christ.

This is an example the like of which might be multiplied. The Scriptures are interknit by an intimate knowledge on the part of the writers of them of the work of those who had gone before. That is, the Bible in its component parts was immensely significant to the men who were themselves amongst the most influential men of the times in which they lived.

Turning to later ages, we find the book still held its own. When the Septuagint version was made, the sphere of Old Testament influence extended amongst Greek speaking peoples; and many an inquiring mind from amongst the Gentiles began to turn to the ancient Hebrew literature as to a light set in a dark place. The instances related in the New Testament, we may be sure, are but samples of what was constantly happening; there were many centurions, many men of Ethiopia, many Greeks coming up to worship at the feast, besides those whose cases are recorded there. Serious minds, feeling the weight of great problems, the nobler men, who formed the better part of their generation,

were glad to find a literature that carried with it a strange note of authority. It was radically different from the literature with which they were already acquainted; much of that was noble, but it was avowedly a speculation. It did not say I know, but I think; not, Thus saith the Lord, but, The conclusions of reason look in this direction or in that. Men were weary and burdened, and it was consolatory to them to find a body of writings which professed to relate the actions of God in history, and to record the sayings of men who were filled with a Spirit divine.

In the early years of the second century of our era the New Testament was practically complete; though the Canon was not finally settled, the books, very much as we have them, had taken their place as a religious literature without a rival. That far-reaching principle of the survival of the fittest had operated; out of a most diverse literature the Gospels, the Acts, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse had emerged as the best of their sort that the world contained.

A dark time was in store for mankind; the great structure of the Roman Empire began to rock towards its fall, and it looked as though the Christian Churches scattered over the length and breadth of it would be involved in the general ruin; but as it was said of the City of the Seven Hills, so long as the Colosseum stands Rome shall stand, so it might have been said of Christianity, so long as the Scriptures stand the Christian faith shall stand also. Through the dreary chaos of a dissolving state the Bible held its own, and men found in its messages strong consolation and clear guidance for their time of need.

In process of time a great change came about. For the Christian ministry a priestly hierarchy was gradually substituted; the Church began to gather to herself an authority over men which previously had been reserved for the Scriptures, as containing a divine word, or for Christ Himself. The Bible fell into the background, its

main use being to supply a repertory of proof texts wherewith to sustain the enormous claims which the Church, or the clergy as representing the Church, put forth. In fact, the Scriptures, and even Christ Himself, became subordinate to that Church which was supposed to exist only by means of their teaching and His living rule. Yet even in those days, when the book, as a whole, seemed shorn of its power, it exerted a penetrating influence.

Its precepts and spirit touched the law, and infused a tenderer tone into the harsh body of Roman jurisprudence; it taught men to love mercy as well as justice. In places of religious retreat, to which men, despairing of the times, had repaired, copies of the Scriptures were to be found; these were read and studied, and deeply influenced men who, with many faults, were yet amongst the better spirits of their time. Even in the very thick of what are called the Dark Ages, there never failed a succession of godly people whose best life was fed from the life of God in the Scriptures. The lamp burned low, but it was never extinguished.

Men like Bernard of Clairvaux, Francis of Assisi,[1] and Louis of France, masters of men as they were, looked to the Bible for light and guidance. No doubt in some ways they terribly misread it, and, armed with a text, they disavowed some of the fairest elements of the life of man as God made it. But, be this as it may, they were deeply

[1] It is related that on one occasion an inquirer, Bernard by name, came to the cell of St. Francis with the question, what should a man do who had received from the Lord possessions which he wished no longer to keep? to whom the saint replied, "We will go at morning-tide to the church, and will learn, through the holy gospel book, as Christ taught His disciples." And in the early morning they two, inquirer and teacher, went to the church and prayed the Lord that He would vouchsafe to show them His will by the first opening of the book. So the story runs; and, whether true or untrue, shows how the hearts of good men turned in a dark age to the Bible, as to a light shining in a dark place. See *Stoics and Saints*, by Baldwin Brown.

affected by the book; it helped to shape and inspire them, as they, in their turn, helped to shape and inspire whole generations in mediæval Europe.

Later came the revival of learning called the Renaissance: that movement, south of the Alps, shaped itself into a study of the ancient pagan literature; men holding high office in the papal Church, whilst they retained the names that belonged to the Christian faith, drew their real inspiration from the poets and philosophers of the Greek and Roman world; they were baptized pagans, only they were baptized first and became pagan afterwards. But, north of the Alps the Renaissance meant a return to the primary Christian literature. The Bible came forth from its comparative obscurity; in this matter Erasmus was at one with Martin Luther, for he did noble service in giving the Scriptures to the people. His appeal against Pope and Church was to Christ and His apostles. The Reformation was really due to the impulse which the study of the Bible created. Men, sick at heart, desiring religion, and yet repelled by the narrowness and greed of churchmen, turned to the book, and found there the undimmed revelation—God in creation, God in history, God in prophecy, and, finally, God in His Son. The Bible became more and more the people's book, and proved itself living and capable of putting forth energy; it moulded the best life of Teutonic and Anglo-Saxon Europe. It is a plain fact of history that the race which, with all its faults, has more virile energy than any other, the race which has conquered India, peopled an American continent, and is now peopling Australia, New Zealand, and habitable Africa, is the race that has preserved the Bible as an open book. It is found in countless homes, and in quiet hours is the chosen companion and counsellor of all sorts and conditions of men. In spite of continual attacks, in spite of that spiritual apathy which is immeasurably more dangerous

than any direct attack, it is more widely circulated and read than any other book in the North American continent and in these British Isles.

Moreover, it has this singular distinction, the Bible is not the possession of any one class. There are ancient classics that are part of the paid-up literary capital of the race; they are known and valued by educated men, and deservedly exert a large influence, but in a direct way they do not affect the million. The labouring man is not acquainted with Thucydides; he knows nothing of the philosophy of Plato or the ethics of Aristotle; Socrates is a name to him, and nothing more. But the Scriptures, in countless instances, are fixed in his memory; his language, in its nobler parts, has been moulded by them; Scripture phrases are welded into his speech; he is prepared for life and death by the words he finds there.

Use and wont blind us to the significance of the fact, that every Lord's day throughout the habitable globe there are to be found assemblies of men and women engaged, with more or less seriousness of attention, in listening to the Bible read in their hearing. No doubt, to some extent, this is done in obedience to a conservative instinct which loves to preserve an ancient custom because it is ancient; and it is done, further, under the influence of great historic Churches which have woven Scripture into the order of their public service, that order holding apart from the active assent of those who use it. But, making all allowance for these collateral influences, the fact still remains that people, gentle and simple, people endowed with the latest culture and people plain and unadorned, are found ready to listen, often with great inward comfort and manifest delight, to words taken from a literature, part of which dates back nearly three thousand years ago.

And this public reading of the Christian Scriptures is rooted in a private reading which is quite as wonderful.

Some people read the Bible in a dull mechanical way; some people read it as though the mere fact that they had read so much would be credited to their account in the final audit; some people read it because of the music of its songs, the simplicity of its narratives, the splendour of its prophetic diction, for, as we have it in our tongue, it is a well of English undefiled. But how many are there who read it because, as they believe, it speaks to them from God, it conveys His mind, and enshrines the great facts of His redemption? In their times of stress and trouble, in the sunshine of prosperity and in the dark shadows of adversity, they say of it, as David did of the sword of Goliath, "Give me that; there is none like it!"

The Bible at this present has penetrated every sphere of civilised life. It has inspired art and moulded law; it has lifted up the moral standard of the race. Some acquaintance with it is part of a liberal education. Its phrases are embedded in our speech. They have become part of the current coin into which is minted man's highest wisdom. Men quote it without knowing the source upon which they have drawn; it has been used in the Senate house and the great assemblies; orators have found in it some of their finest illustrations and most pertinent applications. And, more than all, men have discovered in it, so they believe, the answers to their most vital questions. It has deepened their sense of spiritual need, and then satisfied it. In the book they have heard the voice of their God and Saviour.

This brief sketch indicates the position which the Bible has held in the past. The verdict is decisive—of all books the Bible has been the most significant. Omit all reference to it, suppose that by some intolerable catastrophe every trace of it had vanished from the world, then the student of history would find himself face to face with an insoluble perplexity. He would be compelled to suppose

the existence of a power in human life which had completely disappeared from it. As the astronomer, from the variations in the course of a planet, deduces the existence of another body not then visible, so the historian would have to conceive to himself an extinct literature which had proved itself the greatest factor in the making of the most pregnant movements of history. He would have, as it were, to re-create the book, passages from which are inscribed on every great landmark in the progress of mankind. So much is clear, in the past the Bible has exerted an unrivalled influence.

From these facts can the horoscope of the future be cast; can it be said that a book that has been thus powerful shall continue to exert an influence coeval with the race? Is the Bible like the sun, which shall bless the earth with its light and heat so long as the present system of things shall continue? Or is it like some cosmic force, which once wrought powerfully in the formation of the globe, but now has become quiescent, and can no longer be counted upon as an active energy?

Certainly this generation is being told by voices that do not lack assurance that less and less will the Bible exert an influence upon the lives of men. By a curious confusion of thought, for which the friends of the Bible are themselves, to some extent, answerable, it has been imagined that a more accurate knowledge of the methods of its composition rob it of its value. It is as though a sounder acquaintance with the way in which our earth came to be, a more perfect mapping out of geological processes and periods, would rob our hills and valleys of their beauty, and make our fields less fruitful.

These questions and affirmations can only be satisfactorily answered by an examination, however brief, of the reasons that have given the Christian Scriptures their

present hold upon the world; though it might be said beforehand that it is not unreasonable to suppose that a literature which has become wrought into the very roots of human life and thought has in it elements that cannot die. We must part with our sober judgments if, in a panic, we are to give up as a dead thing a book which, from the composition of its first fragmentary pages up to this present hour, has never ceased to be living and to put forth energy. After all, men may be foolish, but the race is not in this way befooled. Time tries all things. The things that can be shaken disappear, and, as they vanish, make only more evident the things that cannot be shaken. These remain, and the Bible remains amongst them.

First amongst the reasons that have secured for the Bible its pre-eminence, is its literary beauty. It is sometimes said that if only men get the truth, it is of no moment in what form it is presented; if the meal be good, it can be served up as well on delf as on china. But the parallel is misleading, for there is an essential connection between matter and language. Style is much more than a mere trapping, which can be dispensed with and the substance remain intact; it is thought in visible and audible expression. Men are right when they expect that revelation shall ally itself with fitting language, and that great truths shall be set forth in a way that is great. As a matter of fact, there is (happily) no exception to the law that poor literature dies off. If a book is to live, it must be good of its kind.

The Bible submits to this demand; held together by an inner unity of thought and of purpose, it is yet infinitely varied, and in it every note is touched, from a limpid simplicity to the flashing splendours of the most fervent speech human lips can frame. With what dignity is the Creation story related in the Book of Genesis; the subject and the language march abreast. The narratives of the patriarchs are as though they fell from the lips of some heaven-born

speaker, who relates by the camp-fires the incidents that befell his fathers. Not a word can bear omission; very few descriptive epithets are employed, and yet in the end the reader becomes possessed of a human character. He sees rising before him a man with distinctive qualities who brings his lesson with him. We discover, without being directly bidden to note it, the faith of Abraham; the tough secular temper, touched with grace, of Jacob; the frank, generous triviality of Esau; the purity of Joseph, who was at once a man of the world and a man of God. Moses appears a superb figure, yet not superhuman, rather a most human soul, gradually trained to become the prophet and father of a nation; a man of ample powers, yet gracious and pitiful, having compassion on the ignorant and them that were out of the way.

These men, notable as they were, do yet tread the solid earth. Let a critical reader carefully consider such a narrative as that which relates Abraham's purchase of a burial-place for his wife from Ephron the Hittite, in which the colours are as fresh as though laid on but yesterday; or the story of Joseph and his brethren; or the brief paragraph that relates how Moses courteously helped the daughters of Jethro, and protected them from the boorish rudeness of the shepherds,—and then ask himself whether he is not dealing with men who were of God's nobility, and yet were bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. The vehicle is exactly suited to the subject which it has to convey; it is artless, and yet reaches the end of the highest art. Such narratives the world will not let die.

Or let him turn to the pages of the prophets. Without doubt their style is very varied. Hebrew literature, like all other, has its ruder period, its golden age, its time of decadence; and these are to be discovered in the prophetic books. But it may fairly be affirmed that no other body of literature contains, within so small a compass, so much

that is penetrating, magnificent, and sublime. Under the influence of historical criticism some of the prophetic books have been rediscovered for our generation. They have been put back into their actual setting, and educated men have confessed that they did not know what a wealth of imagery, what intense realism, what moral fervour, what a noble trust in God, are to be found in them.

Take but one example from the Minor Prophets. Habakkuk lived and wrote, probably, at the close of the seventh century B.C. The conditions of his life were about as different from our own as it is possible to conceive; and yet let a man who is perplexed and staggered by what is permitted under the government of God turn to his pages, he will find set forth, in language that is immortal, the struggles of a soul that felt as he feels, facing his doubts, and slowly beating his music out, until he reaches the haven of a perfect trust. Such a man is indeed our brother—we clasp hands across the centuries: a trust such as his is the goal of all philosophy and of all religion.

Perhaps the most modern book in the Old Testament is the Book of Job. It is fearless in its expression of those questions which, above all, beset and perplex the good. It refuses the common-place solutions with which men try to silence the anguished cries of the conscience, it even vindicates them. In the end, the much-tried sufferer is righted by God Himself, and he becomes the intercessor for his well-meaning but tedious and exasperating friends. All is handled with a breadth of view, a wealth of imagery, and a splendour of diction that sets the book in the front rank of the dramatic literature of the world.

The Psalms contain a body of devotional literature which is unique. In a manner they are dateless compositions; it is of comparatively small moment when they were written or by whom. Feeling, experience, despair, and trust—these belong to a world in which already time

is no more. It adds to the interest of the 23rd Psalm if we can be assured that it was written by David; the 90th Psalm becomes more significant if we can believe that Moses was its author, and that he wrote it as he led the Israelites up and down the aimless wilderness. But such points are not vital; they do not affect the tender sweetness, the quiet trust of the one psalm, nor do they make the other less fitted to express man's sense of his mortality; its words fall upon our ear like the tolling of a funeral bell; nowhere else is the brevity of man's life and the eternity of God so set forth. The Psalms have supplied the battle songs to men fighting for home and freedom, they have been sung in the hour of victory, and men have gone down to the grave with the words of them upon their lips. And these things have been so because, amongst other reasons, they supply the most exquisite vehicle for the expression of spiritual experience which the world contains. This is but to say that in their way, and for their end, they are perfect as literature. Put them away, and one great aspect of the deeper life of man would cease to find its final setting forth.

From a literary point of view the New Testament stands upon a somewhat different level from that occupied by the Old. The Gospels (as we shall see more fully—later) are dominated by one supreme personality, and the function of the evangelists is to set down, without prejudice, what they had seen and heard concerning Him. The writer has to be obliterated by his subject; rhetoric, finished phrases—these have their value, and are not to be despised; but they are out of place when a man has to tell of the things which Jesus began both to do and to teach. When heaven comes down to this world, we do not want to know what the recording angel may think of the apocalypse, but what actually happens, and this is what the evangelists have succeeded in describing. With an

unfailing self-restraint, without adjectives or marks of admiration, with a transparent simplicity, they have sketched a perfect life, lived under the ordinary conditions of humanity. They have done what was never done before or since, they have made actual a figure which without their words could only have been thought of as ideal. The humanity and the Deity are unimpaired, and stand in unimagined combination; they coalesce, and yet the orb of each is complete. Many persons are introduced into the Gospel narratives, many characters are developed, but nothing is permitted to interfere with the main purpose, which is to set forth the Christ; we see no man save Jesus only.

It is vain to tell us that the Greek of the evangelists is poor, lacking classical finish; that sentences are often rude, and that Aramaic phrases abound: all such criticism is a triviality,—the main end is accomplished, and that it is, means that the writings that do it are of the very highest order.

In the Epistles the reader moves again in a different field. In them history is subordinate; broken threads of it can be discovered here and there and pieced together; there are personal references, but the main purpose of the apostolic letters is to unfold and develop the significance of the facts which the Gospels supply. These facts are not exhausted when they are narrated, they do not end in themselves, and by a necessary instinct men look for some light upon the inner meaning of them. Moreover, the Christian life created new experiences, and these had to be brought into line. And thus, whilst, like every other part of the Bible, the Epistles of the New Testament were written with some immediate purpose in view,—to correct an error, to expand a truth, or to express affection,—they are yet for all time.

In James the Christian rabbi speaks, in Peter the

Christian pastor, in John the Christian mystic, in Paul reason and feeling are fused into an incomparable dialectic. And whilst it must be admitted that sometimes the fire in his thought melts the mould of words into which it is cast, so that the grammarian and verbal commentator are driven to despair, yet are there passages from the pen of the Apostle of the Gentiles that hold a supreme place in the literary treasures of the race. The eulogium upon love, and the resurrection chapter in the 1st Corinthian Epistle, the apostolic prayer for the Ephesians, and the Epistle to Philemon, come to mind as examples.

In venturing to speak about the literary element in the Bible as supplying one source of its permanent significance, it seems as though an apology were due to the devout reader, to whom it sounds almost profane to speak thus about books that for him contain the words of his Saviour and the messages of redemption; he becomes impatient about a point of view that seems to give significance to what, after all, in infinite matters, is so subordinate, that it may well be dismissed. But such need to remember that the Scriptures have to be considered as they affect the great common world, into the thick of which they are cast. If all men had reached the purely spiritual point of view, then, perhaps, the literary aspect of the Bible might be put aside. But all men have not reached that point, they are attracted or they are repelled by the vehicle in which divine things are conveyed to them. If the Scriptures, as literature, had not risen above the level of the Koran or Mormon Bible, we may be quite sure that they would have been neglected. Even in them the heavenly treasure is committed to an earthen vessel; but that vessel is of great fitness and beauty. It has attracted, and it will not cease to attract, all sorts and conditions of men who are open to the influence of cadence and of rhythm, of sweet

thoughts sweetly spoken, of a noble message nobly expressed.

From the literary aspect of the Bible we may advance to the historic, as supplying another reason for belief in its permanent significance. It is native to the mind of man to desire to know how things came to be. We cannot contemplate a great building, a venerable form of government, or an ancient philosophy, without desiring to know who were the founders and builders of them; we would see the process of their formation and growth. Looked at from this point of view, the Bible is a unique book of origins; it alone supplies some account of the beginnings of certain facts which are of pre-eminent moment to mankind.

It opens with the story of the creation of the world and of man. The story is composite, and bears evidence of points of contact with other cosmogonies, the biblical account being peculiar in this, that it is free from puerilities; it moves with unequalled dignity, and it is so composed as not to compel to any one theory of the mode of creation, whilst it maintains intact the primary facts of a Creator distinct from His works, and a creation produced by an orderly process of development which makes man the summit and crown of the whole creative movement. It is a record that can be appreciated by the unlettered man, conveying to his mind certain cardinal truths; and yet it appeals no less to the man who has already learned much from the records embedded in the strata of the earth, and from the advancing formations of animal life.

No doubt there have been biblical commentators, more courageous than wise, who have tried to compel the Creation story to move to their music; they have boldly made it a partisan, and it has suffered obloquy when they have suffered defeat. But when one asks how better could some

rough outline of the creative process be conveyed to mankind in a way that should have a message for all men, our question gets no reply.

The story is told, not prosaically, not scientifically, but dramatically—that is, in a human way, in which great facts are rather shadowed forth than closely described. The end being to teach us that the builder and maker of all things is God; that He works from the rudimentary to the complex; and that, at last, man appeared upon a stage already prepared for his advent, akin to the earth he trod and yet akin to the God that made him; a living soul, innocent, free, open to temptation, capable of rising, no less of falling, the one possibility involving the other. This creature of God is tempted from without; tried, but not coerced, he yields, and in yielding casts the blame, as ever, upon another. And thus sin came into the world, and the Creator, if He is not to be defrauded of His choicest work, must become Redeemer. The record of the Fall, God being of an infinite compassion, supplies the preface to the story of Redemption.

Passing from the beginnings of all history, there stand now two facts which dominate the religious interests of mankind—these are Judaism and Christianity. Whatever may be men's attitude with regard to them, these two facts remain unmoved; they are not subjective developments, which may be true for one man but of no moment to his neighbour; they are the master facts in religion, and man by nature is a religious being.

We know that when man advanced above the low levels of animal life, and began to look about him; when he saw the wide heavens, and the great stars, and the glowing sun; when he felt the forces of nature play round him, and marked the succession of the seasons, seedtime and harvest, summer and winter,—then his thoughts took shape, he filled the world with gods grotesque and loath-

some, or of exquisite beauty; he pictured to himself lords many and gods many. On the plains of Babylonia, by the sea-coasts of Palestine, in Egypt, and in sunny Greece, men worshipped gods and demi-gods innumerable. Art, science, philosophy—all these were powerless to clear the world's Pantheon. Presently there appeared, situated geographically right in the very thick of the ruling nations of the world, a handful of people. By race they were akin to their Semitic neighbours; they were a pastoral and agricultural people, not clever in the arts, not conversant with philosophy; living for generations in a rude way, such luxuries as they had being imported. But in one point they differed from all other peoples about them, they worshipped one God; in a world full of polytheists they were monotheists. That is a remarkable fact. They had their lapses; but spite of these, they gradually grew firmer in their faith. Political deterioration and ruin did not hinder their religious advance. Finally, they cast away all other gods, and worshipped the one God, Jehovah the God of Israel.

The attempt has been made to explain this wonderful difference between the Jews and their neighbours on the ground of what has been called the Semitic instinct. Different races, it has been said, possess different characteristics; some are more religiously disposed than others; some, under the influence of a prolific imagination, are polytheists, whilst the Semite was naturally given to monotheism. But the facts do not sustain this ingenious suggestion. The Semitic nations of Syria, Phœnicia, and Mesopotamia were polytheists, like the rest of mankind. They worshipped Dagon, Ashtaroth, and Baal.[1] What, then, made the difference; what gave rise to monotheistic

[1] "Amongst the theocratically governed nations of the East, the Hebrews seem to us as sober men among drunkards" (Lotze, *Microcosmus*, vol. ii. p. 267, Eng. trans.).

Judaism? The Bible, and the Bible alone, gives the answer.

It relates the history of Abraham—his call, his separation from his polytheistic kindred, his migration, and the rise of the Jewish race. It describes, in broad outlines, here and there more detailed, the long process of education through which the Hebrew nation passed. We see them at times lusting exceedingly after other gods, trying to unite the worship of Baal with the worship of Jehovah; we see the revelation becoming clearer, their hold upon it more firm, until at last, though politically a discredited people, they appear as the guardians of the one fundamental truth which carries within itself all else—God is one and His name one.

After Judaism, the next great religious fact is Christianity. It is greater than Judaism, as the finished product is greater than the raw material wrought up into its substance, or as the end is greater than the steps by which it has been reached. Christianity is not an appendix of Judaism, though there was a time in its history when some would have made it that; it is rather its completion, the haven of its rest. Judaism, in its essential elements, was an *ad interim* dispensation; it was a religion of symbols and shadows. If nothing had come after it, if it had remained, as the orthodox Jew of to-day believes it did remain, its prophecy still unfulfilled, nursing empty hopes and looking for the consolation of a larger revelation, which, after all, had never come, then it would have been discredited.

But Christianity has come to be; it stands in the world the most significant of all religious facts. It cannot be denied that it exists, that for many years it has existed, and that it exerts a most potent influence upon the thought and the actual life of mankind. For many centuries its history has been interwoven with the history of the race. No author who undertakes to give an account of the

development of national life in Europe and in America can afford to ignore it. There is not only the fact that the peoples, in whose hands are the governing forces of the world to-day, have covered their lands with sanctuaries dedicated to Jesus Christ, and that Christian worship binds the earth together with a girdle of prayer and praise,—there is the deeper fact, of which such things are the tangible evidence, that it has laid a powerful hand upon the very springs of the life of man; it has moulded philosophies, inspired art, shaped social customs, changed ideas. The contrast between the Europe of the first century and the Europe of the nineteenth, immense as it is, could not be accounted for upon any theory of natural development, unless that movement were aided by some such force as Christianity supplies.

These things being so, it is a singular fact that secular history, which relates the advance of the Christian faith, gives the very scantiest account of its origin, gives indeed no account at all. There are fragmentary notices in Josephus and the younger Pliny, there are records of early persecutions, but no clear, concise, definite account is obtainable of the beginnings of that new faith which was presently to shake the Roman world, and finally to seat itself upon the throne of empire. It seems as though the men who might have rendered this inestimable service were smitten with mental blindness; the whole Christian movement was to them so small, so weak, so entirely unimportant that it never occurred to them to trace it to its source. They held it to be a local folly, a provincial fanaticism, which might well be left alone with good-natured contempt.[1] Indeed, there are many evidences that the ruling

[1] Mr. Lecky remarks that nothing is more remarkable than the unconsciousness of pagan writers of the second and third centuries of the power that was growing up amongst them prior to the hour of its triumph.

powers in the first century desired to let it severely alone; but when Christianity became strongly aggressive, then it was dealt with, not as a bad religion, but as a political nuisance, which, for the sake of peace, must be put down with a strong hand.

Where it came from, how it came to be, its true relation to Judaism, and the hostility of traditional Judaism to Christianity—about these questions little inquiry was made, and the world, with one solitary exception, was actually left without information as to the source of an influence which has wrought upon it more powerfully than any other; it knew no more about that than did the Egyptians of the fountainhead of that great river Nile which assured their country of fertility and wealth.

That one solitary exception was supplied by the historical books of the New Testament. These tell us of the birth of the Founder of Christianity; they relate how, trained in no human school, in due time He came forth to be the teacher of a new religion; they succeed in portraying a unique figure, absolutely simple and unofficial, with no mark of conventional authority, living a stainless life, doing deeds that won for Him the hearts of men; in His speech moving easily amidst the sublimest topics, talking of God as His Father, and of heaven as His home. They relate how, later, He became the object of suspicion and hatred to the priesthood of His nation, these never relenting until they had brought Him to His Cross. With no change of style, these books, as they have spoken of the Cross and death and burial of Christ, go on to tell of His resurrection, of the fellowship which men had with Him after He had risen, and, finally, of His departure from this visible scene a living person.

Later, one of the evangelists takes up his pen, and, with the significant reference to his Gospel as the relation of that which Jesus began both to do and to teach,—as

though he were about to continue the story of the same life, gives an account of the followers of Jesus. They were very unlike their Master, a truly human combination of iron and clay and fine gold, making mistakes, failing to apprehend the full significance of the faith they held, carried by the irresistible force of circumstances far beyond the ideas with which they had started, until the circle widens, and from Jerusalem the new religion spread to Judea, to Samaria, and, at last, to the Gentile world. The later history gathers about one man, once intensely hostile, but presently won over to the faith of Christ; and we see him carrying that faith into the ruder parts of what is now Asia Minor, then pressing forward to the shores of the Ægean Sea, thence making the critical passage to Europe, founding Christian communities in the chief cities of Greece; and finally, though in a manner he had not foreseen, this man is found in Rome itself, ministering, even in his prison house, to a Church which he had not founded, but which owed more to him than to any other Christian teacher.

At that point the narrative breaks off; only by a careful comparison of notices scattered up and down the Pauline Epistles can we make out anything of a later date.

But, indeed, nothing further is needed; our curiosity desires more, but the necessities of the case have been answered. The origin of Christianity, its Founder, its early struggles for existence, its spread throughout the length and breadth of that empire which was then almost co-extensive with the known world—all this is secured to us. It is for others to say whether this precious fragment of history sufficiently accounts for what came after, whether it does or does not supply an adequate starting-point for the amazing development that followed. But this much is clear, the book that contains it must be of permanent significance to every generation of men. It is inconceivable that so priceless a record should be permitted to drop

into oblivion. By reason of the missing link in the world's deepest history which it supplies, the Bible stands, and must stand, a volume of inestimable worth.

In dwelling thus upon the literary and historical value of Holy Scripture as sustaining a belief in its continued pre-eminence, the subject has moved on lower levels, which cannot, however, be omitted from our survey, for they furnish the foot-hills of a loftier range. There follows the consideration of the moral and spiritual worth of the Bible as making it certain that it shall live and work so long as man exists upon this earth. The moral and the spiritual shade off by imperceptible degrees into each other; together they form the religious, but it is convenient to view them, to some degree, as distinct.

By the moral is meant, in the first instance, that which has to do with manners, or, deeper, with the quality of conduct; by moral law is meant that complex of laws that should rule the complex of conduct. Man is a creature possessing a conscience and freedom; he is a moral being. As such, in spite of his frightful lapses, his immoralities, his fallen estate, he has, in the person of his best men, elaborated ethical systems; he has devised schemes of conduct, and pictured to himself ideals; he has felt the force of that word — ought, which seems to set up a standard outside himself, indicating what he should do, and what he should abstain from doing. And thus, throughout the ages, in nearly every land, great moral teachers have arisen. It would be wrong to condemn them, or to pay them but a grudging homage; it would be untrue to say that outside Scripture all is dark, and within all is luminous; there are bright points outside the Bible, and there is twilight within it. But in these matters we must judge, not by the steps of a process so much as by the end arrived at. It is conceivable that at points the

lower system may outstrip the higher, and yet itself, in the end, be wholly surpassed. And thus it has been, when we take the best of the world's moral teaching, so far as we can disentangle it from Christian ethics, and put it side by side with the final moral teaching of the Bible, then there can be no question where the pre-eminence and perfection lie. This must be looked at somewhat in detail, for there has been not a little confusion of thought.

The Bible has been spoken of as though it were what the Mohammedan holds the Koran to be—a book of an equal moral value all through. Leviticus and Esther have been put upon the level of the Epistle to the Ephesians or the Gospel of John. It has been imagined that if it came from God, then every part must be, not simply relatively perfect or good for its end, but absolutely so. Which is as much as to say that the bud, the blossom, the inchoate form are as the fruit which comes at the end of the series; that the babe and the child are as the full-grown man.

When once this conception has been adopted, then there follows, of necessity, a perversion of facts and of moral judgments in order to sustain it. The lives of the patriarchs, not only in some noble element in them which the Divine Providence was educating and perfecting, but in the details of conduct, have been held up as models for Christian men in the nineteenth century. The wars of early Israel have been supposed to give a divine sanction to racial cruelties; slavery has been supported out of the Bible; the imprecatory psalms have been defended in a way that has been something other than a defence of healthy, righteous indignation. In a word, it has been supposed that the Author of revelation has been honoured, and His cause defended, by ignoring that process of gradual development and enlightenment which reigns supreme in every other field of the divine activity.

The effect of this method of handling Scripture has

been painfully disastrous. Opponents have not been slow to avail themselves of it, and have put disturbing, and even unanswerable, questions. They have won an easy victory by asking whether a man who should act as some of the early patriarchs are reported to have done would now be permitted to exist outside bedlam or a prison; or whether wars conducted on the lines of the Hebrew invasion of Canaan would not now awaken universal execration.

The remedy is to let the book speak for itself,—to view it as a whole, which, growing slowly through the centuries, begins with Adam and ends with Christ. The wider survey reveals the fact, which becomes increasingly clear as it is considered, that we have in it the record of a growing moral enlightenment,—an enlightenment which has been gained, both through the workings of Providence in human history, and by luminous teaching dropped into that course from above. It has been well said that the general formative truths of the Old Testament were progressive forces in early history. The story of the creation, which has been already touched upon in another connection, has been of inestimable service to the moral progress of mankind. It reveals, in a unique way, God as Creator, and as akin to man; it indicates the source of evil in the world as springing from man's abuse of freedom; it is dead against fatalism, idolatry, pantheism, and atheism.

The story of the Jewish people, though in parts sad reading, is the story of a slow but real growth in moral ideals. The nation is seen gradually ceasing to be a wild and savage horde, difficult to govern, and ever ready to drop into abominable excesses. Step by step it emerged into a condition in which a higher law obtained, and men acknowledged the claims of righteousness. It was a true instinct that led the Jews to group their historical Scriptures with the prophetic books, for they are written mainly from the prophetic standpoint: policies are judged, kings

and the rise and fall of nations, according as they discover obedience or disobedience to divine law, so far as that was then revealed. Political wisdom was conceived of as submission to the will of God, and political astuteness, however keen, was held to be but unwisdom if it rebelled against that.

The prophets, as a class, were found in Israel alone. Other nations had their soothsayers, their astrologers and stargazers,—the Jews themselves were not without a taste for such professors of black arts,—but the prophets are not to be confounded with these men. The prophet was a man possessed by a vivid consciousness of the presence of the living God, before whom, in his thought, he ever stood. If need were, he could stand up alone against king, priest, and people; he spared none, his passion was for righteousness. There are words in the old prophetic books of the Bible that are amongst the very finest pleas for just laws, honest judges, a respect for the poor, a care for the outcast, for social righteousness. The moral fervour of the prophet was amazing; it lifted him above all externals. With purged eyes, penetrating into the heart of things, he declared that religious worship, the trampling of temple courts, sacrifices, and incense were an abomination when allied with iniquity. It were useless to mourn and fast and smite the breast, and then use a false balance and light weights. To praise God in a psalm, and then to exact the last farthing of usurious interest, was infinitely worse than to be a dumb dog in religion all your days.

It was this blending together of social duties with the sense of God, making them part of His service, that set the prophet a man by himself—a veritable word of the Lord, quick and powerful. He saw that worship, precious as it is, is but a means to an end, and that end is that men should do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. God was in the heaven, yea, the heaven of heavens could

not contain Him, but He was to be obeyed in this present secular world by the homely graces of truthfulness, kindliness, and faithfulness to duty.

Other nations had noble minds that built up in a philosophic way ethical systems; other nations had patriotic leaders and righteous men; but the Jew only had the prophetic man, who, knowing little of schemes of ethics, and often but little of policies, did yet surpass all others in his knowledge of human duty as an interpretation of God's will into conduct. In the Old Testament the moral trend is upward. We do not find in it the perfect ideal, but we do find in it that ascending movement which prepared for it that shining stairway by which one passes from the Decalogue to the Sermon on the Mount. God was at work from the earliest dawn of the race, beginning with man as He found him, and with infinite patience leading him forward, preparing him for the larger revelation and the perfect redemption, even as the dawn prepares for the coming of the day.

If we once admit that God has mankind under training, the lessons of necessity starting from the lower levels; and, further, that the Old Testament contains the critical passages in the earlier parts of this educative process,—then we are bound to look for a consummation, and it is this which the New Testament supplies. We have there what has been called the ultimate morality, which took up into itself the best of all that had gone before. There is nothing original in this sense that it can afford to dissociate itself from all that precedes it; to imagine such a thing is to condemn the past, and the Maker of it, in order to glorify the present. In this sense, then, of dissociation from the past, New Testament morality is not original; but it is original in this, that it possesses a perfect balance, a rounded completeness; that it makes the principle of faith a motive force in morals; and that it is expressed, not simply in a succession of precepts, but in the character

and conduct of a person. One at length appeared who could say, If you would be good, follow Me; do as I do, be as I am, and you will fulfil all moral law.

This balance and completeness of New Testament morals gives the book a unique value. As a rule, ethical teachers have tried to enforce their views of duty by the exaggeration of one aspect of conduct to the detriment of others equally important, or by restricting themselves to a single section of society. One deals with men and masters, but has little to say about women, and nothing about the slave. Another emphasises manners, but pays little attention to the real core of conduct, the motive and the heart. Still another would have a man create for himself an impossible world, in order that he may the better cultivate his own character. Life—rough, secular life—is felt to be an evil not to be overcome; it must therefore be evaded, in order to be good. Or the body is held to be the original seat and source of evil, and therefore, in the name of a higher good, must be denied its rights and put under ban. Whole schemes of morals have been built up which omit God, whilst others have so leaned towards the divine aspect that they no longer walk this solid earth; they lack the practical note. It is only by a tedious combination, a sort of eclectic policy, that out of the moralities with which the world abounds a rounded and balanced teaching can be constructed.

In the New Testament all is different; it lays its hand upon every section of society; it does not legislate for a class, but for all, because it deals with man as man. The body is respected, and the common life of the world. Man is held to be a creature belonging to two worlds, having duties to his fellows, to himself, and to his God. What a man is stands there above what he does, and yet conduct is not neglected. The Sermon on the Mount, with its beatitudes, its heavenly air, its glorious ideals, is not con-

tradicted by the plain homespun of Paul's exhortations to diligence, to sobriety, to the modest mind; or by his appeals to masters and servants, to husbands and wives and children. Together they form a perfect whole; or better, here is a world with plenty of sky-room above it, and sunshine over all. What has appeared to be an insoluble difficulty has been overcome; body and soul, earth and heaven, man and God, have each received what is due.

But more than this; in the New Testament the question, What is goodness? is answered, not only by a wide variety of precepts and ideals (which are precepts glorified), but by the presentation of a Person who did Himself exemplify all that He taught. He was the only teacher that the world has ever had who was Himself all that He demanded. "Follow Me" was with Him the sum-total of duty.

As men stand before the figure depicted in the Gospels, they are at once humbled and charmed; they feel, here is one immeasurably their superior, and yet not less, but more human than they are themselves. He did not live by rule a life of visible, external separation from the world; He did not maim one part of Him in order that the rest might thrive the better. Only let men be what He was, let them live as He lived, and heaven would be begun.

When He is considered more closely, it is discovered how far He was from the conventional type of goodness accepted in His day and country. He differed from it down to the very roots of character, for He started from a different conception of God. All about Him were men honest and sincere, who did verily believe that the way to please God was to live under the dominion of footrules, balances, and calendars; with them a day had been well spent in which, with unspeakable labour and endless caveats, they had kept within the letter of the law, as that was interpreted by the tradition of the elders. He lived amongst these people, yet He was uninfluenced by them; in com-

parison, His life was as free as a bird's. He loved nature, it supplied Him with material for exquisite parables setting forth God and human duty; He loved men with a deep and passionate affection; He had His intimates, He enjoyed their companionship; of one of them it is said, in a truly human way, that He loved him. In His deepest sorrows He clung to these men, but His love was wider; it embraced all sorts and conditions, even as the heavens overspan and embrace the earth. He was gracious, unassuming, always ready to spend and be spent for others, and yet withal He had a capacity for righteous indignation that at times flamed up and almost consumed those whom it touched. Jesus Christ was the incarnation of a perfect morality, and that fact claims for Him and for the pages that enshrine Him a certain immortality.

It is said, indeed, that this unique person is a mythical product, that in process of time, having got hold of a noble personality, men accumulated imaginary matter about Him, they added the halo and the nimbus. One would like to know where are the men who, rising above the level of human nature, were able by any conceivable process to create Jesus Christ; for, if they are to be found, let us go and worship them. But they are not to be found. Happily, though in a manner sadly enough, we have plenty of examples of man's handiwork in this matter. We know something of the Christ of earthly tradition, we know the mediæval Christ, we know the theological Christ, we know the Christ evacuated of deity in order to save His humanity, we know the Christ evacuated of humanity in order to save His deity, and we know that they differ as much from the Christ of the Gospels as does the stiff and grotesque figure in a painted window from the living man.

The Christ of the evangelists in the broad outlines of His character stands shining clear in His own light, the child, the son, the guest, the citizen, the teacher, the friend,

the lover of mankind, translating into daily conduct His own highest utterances, living and dying in such wise as to supply the final pattern for all human goodness. In Him the noble outline of the Old Testament is fulfilled, for He did justly, loved mercy, and walked humbly with God. He is immeasurably greater than the book that contains the records of what He was; He secures for it a perpetual significance; it can never be that the world will let fall into oblivion the words that describe the Son of Man.

The subject of this discussion has now reached its climax. Man is a spiritual being; he has commerce with the invisible, and is at home in the eternal. Supply his bodily wants, meet his æsthetic tastes, fill him with music and with song, expand his mind, let him take science and philosophy as his field, endow him with troops of friends; and yet, if this be all, he is discontented, disconsolate, and these moods of depression deepen into misery and gloom, and that because the nobler part of him is unmet. Is there, he asks, one greater than all other, a God? And if so, of what sort is He? How does He regard man? And what of these sins: this sense of disobedience that seems to betoken, not simply an abstract rule of right broken, but a personal relation violated?

True, we are told with much elaboration of statement that tribes of men have been discovered who cannot count beyond ten, and who appear to know and care nothing for a God. It is suggested that these are examples of man in his natural state, unconscious of spiritual needs and unperplexed by religion, and that in them the great problem is stated in its genuine simplicity. And hence, that the thirst for God and for forgiveness are figments, concocted by theologians and foolish people of that order. This is the sort of reasoning that would prove that it is not native to the eagle to breast the roomy air and gaze upon

the sun, because an eagle has been known to refuse to quit its cage when the door has been thrown open; or, that man, left to himself, loves confinement and hugs his chains because a captive has been discovered who chose a prison rather than freedom. The answer surely is that in judging of mankind from man, he must be looked at when at his best; and, further, our view must be extended over long spaces of time and wide areas of this habitable earth. When that is done, it becomes clear that man stretches out his hands after God, if, haply, he may feel after Him and find Him. The Hebrew psalmist spoke for the race when he cried: "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God."

It is here that the Bible stands unapproachable; it handles matters of undying interest; it is the record of a divine revelation. Its literary beauty, its historical value, its moral worth, are all embraced in this larger purpose; they are not unimportant, but they are subordinate.

It is, as this conception is grasped, the Bible, the record of a revelation which in its nature is progressive, that we are able to hold its various parts in due perspective; there is found to be an ascending order of values, and the whole is to be judged by its end. Much that is imperfect, viewed absolutely, is then discovered to be relatively perfect as a step in a process, the end of which is the coming of the Son of God in the flesh.

It opens, not with an argument in favour of theism, but with the bold declaration, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"; it moves forward to tell the story of lives that are inexplicable without Him. He is the one element common to them all; there is many a failure, many a gross blot; yet did these men live and die in the faith that takes hold on God.

Its course expands into the history of a nation of which hard things can be said,—a dark, perverse, and passionate people, inferior in many things to the nations in the midst

of which they lived, only by slow and painful steps advancing to a more spiritual conception of God. In spite of themselves they were under education, and this singular fact emerges, that national decay did not mean that the great lessons of their history had been lost upon them; for at last, when they had been reduced in numbers and in spirit, they were found to have ceased from idolatry, and to abhor it; in theory as a whole, and in practice as to their best men, they became (as we have seen) Monotheists, who believed that God is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

Their worship, crusted over with formalism as it was, and defaced by rabbinical tradition, was yet the worship of a God, living, working, ruling, holy, invisible, whose very name was not to be pronounced by unclean lips. The moral element shades off into the spiritual, and the Hebrew psalter, part of it doubtless of a late date, remains the highest expression of the life of a human spirit in its intercourse with the Father of spirits. Here, again, God is not the climax of our argument; He is a postulate, without whom the deepest experience of the heart of man becomes only so much subjective movement, indicative of nothing save his immense capacity for self-deception; his anguish and his tears, his splendid hopes and hallelujah songs, though they inspire him to faithful living and holy dying, are but fond things fondly conceived, unless, indeed, there be a God who loves and saves.

And thus the history reveals God at work in the world, the supreme factor whose power is everywhere ruling and overruling in heathen kingdoms as well as in Israel, the God of all the earth. The prophets reveal a God of perfect righteousness, who smites the evil-doer, man or people, and yet withal pities, yearns over the lost, and is ready to forgive. The law, considered not only in its rudimentary enactments, but in its expansion in the provisions of the

priestly code, and all the details of a ceremonial system, reveals a God educating a dull-hearted people—in part through the eye, in primary truths about themselves and Himself. The psalter reveals a God who can commune with His creatures, holding sweet converse with them, many psalms being so constructed as to convey the speech of God to man, as well as the speech of man to God.

The Old Testament is thus in its broad outlines the record of the various phases of an advancing revelation; it deals with subjects that can never fail to interest any man who thinks and feels and has in him a conscience. But it lacks finality; it is as one who stands upon his watch-tower with his hand shading the eyes, in the attitude of expectancy; it has what has been called a forward look.

Has that forward look been disappointed; are hands still stretched out as in the vacant, irresponsive air?

So far it has been God in history, God inspiring men, God educating them, God communing with them; and in all these acts and persons God has been revealed. Yet not fully, not in suchwise as that the nameless millions of every tribe and kindred and tongue could find and know Him. It were impossible to think that the world were to be judaised in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. In the fulness of time there came the final revelation, not God in the man as He was in the Hebrew prophets and saints, but God and man for ever become one in Jesus Christ, in whom we see what God is, and what man was meant to be and may become. If man had not fallen, perhaps this might have been all; but man being what he is—a sinner—the revelation of God that should not blight and destroy, but bless and save him, must recognise that fact, meet it, deal with it, forgive and overcome it. The Gospels are the record of that redeeming revelation of God in a life lived in this world, ending in a death that was as other deaths, and yet absolutely different, in that it gathered up into itself

elements that express God's judgment upon sin as unspeakably grievous and hateful, His compassion for sinners, and man's consent through the representative man to the suffering and sacrifice it involves if it is to be overcome. The fourfold record ends with the affirmation, variously stated, that He who died lives again, and doth for ever live.

The Book of the Acts is broadly the record of that revelation at work in the world, coming into contact with the Jew, the Samaritan, the proselyte, and the Gentile pure and simple, and in this way becoming absorbed into the life-blood of the race. The book looks like a fragment; it ends abruptly, as though the author had it in mind to write further pages, and yet it has a sort of completeness; it begins with Jerusalem and Pentecost, and ends with universal Rome.

The Epistles of the New Testament stand upon a somewhat different plane; they consist mainly of explanations of the great redemptive acts of Christ, together with the application to actual life of the moral standard, which finds its pattern and inspiration in Him.

These things are infinitely significant, and they impart something of their own quality to the book that tells the story of them; and yet one thing more is needed if we are to affirm the permanent significance of the Bible. For there are many pages in history, there are the records of many lives that move men deeply, they form part of the inalienable possession of all the generations; but they are not personal to us, they are not in actual vital contact with us as are our living friends, they can do nothing for us apart from our own initiative, they do not break down our reserves; unless we take the first step, they are to us as though they were not. There are many persons who regard the Christ, about whom the Scriptures finally gather, as they regard other noble and excellent persons who have lived and wrought for humanity; so far as their consciousness

goes, He is a dead man down in Judea, He can only rule them from His urn. There is no guarantee that for them He may not be eclipsed by some other interest, and with His disappearance the book that tells about Him would lose its pre-eminence.

But there are other experiences to be met with throughout the Christian centuries, and to-day they exist the wide world over. They are in no sense provincial, they are universal, in that they have been found for nearly two millenniums, and in all lands. There have been, and there are, those who affirm that for them Jesus Christ lives, that He is of all most real, and that they want to give Him of their very best in the way of reverence, of affection, of trust, of loyal service and devotion. He is the most potent and energetic factor in their lives, and, *mutatis mutandis*, their experiences are a prolongation of the experiences of the men and women with whom Christ had to do when on earth. In some wonderful way the record found in the written page has actually been the means of setting up a personal relation, a living experience. In a sense the letter has given place to the spirit; that fact makes the letter even of the Gospels a means and not an end, but at the same time it invests the letter with perpetual worth.

The Bible has upon it the seal of many and manifold experiences, it is the vehicle of a revelation which no other book contains, and this revelation lives and works with deathless energy. The book lives because He lives who superintented its production, and that Redeemer lives to tell of whom is its final function. The revelation justifies itself in changed lives, and conduct set to a heavenly note, in courage, patience, purity, and homely goodness. And thus the book stands firm in its own essential fitness and beauty, and in the work it accomplishes.

If by an effort of the imagination we could call up to

view some of the countless phases of human experience that have been created by its words, and could place the record of them side by side with the printed text, what a volume we should have! By this scripture a tempted soul stood firm; by this a poor struggler entered into rest; by this a golden light broke out upon a clouded world; by this despair was conquered and gave place to a peace ineffable; yes, and by this a timid heart went forth without a tremor to meet the shadow feared of man. Indeed, there is no aspect of our existence in this world that has not been knit up with the words of the Bible, approving them in this way to have come from God.

This book, then, is involved in the deepest life of man; it at once meets his needs as a sinful creature with the record of a revelation that justifies itself in his experience, and it supplies him with the most perfect vehicle the world contains for the expression of his religious aspirations, his hopes and fears, his penitence, and his trust.

It is but to expand this fact to say that life finds its best commentary in the Bible, even as the Bible finds its best commentary in human life. There is a curious correlation between the two; the procession of the ages, the widening and deepening of experience, do not carry either the individual or the race beyond Scripture, but make it more significant. There is surely truth in the profound observation of Butler, that if the Bible contain a revelation from God, it may contain truths as yet undiscovered, and that events, as they come to pass, may open and ascertain the meaning of Scripture. (See C. A. Row on Butler, *Analogy*, pt. II. cap. iii.) The Bible is not a something outside the order of things, but is itself part and parcel of that order. It contains the keynote of a process of revelation which is even now going on, and he who reads and thinks and prays, keeping an open eye upon events personal to himself and upon the wider fields of time and

of the world, will discover an increasing and continuous correspondence between the book and the life. This is what might have been looked for if the dispensation of the Spirit succeeded to the manifestation of the Word made flesh.

The Bible is literature and more than literature; it is history and more than history. It contains the highest morals in solution, not set forth in a system, but exemplified in human lives and in a unique life; yet it is more than a book of morals. It contains the story of the movements of God in the redemption of mankind; it gains its authority from the message it conveys; it is written that men might believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that believing they might have life through His name. Until man ceases to sin, until he ceases to be a creature desiring to know about the God that made him, and his own origin and prospects,—until then the Bible will continue to be of abiding significance to every generation of men; and as the knowledge of its contents grows, so will its influence increase. On its head are many crowns, and of its kingdom there shall be no end.

NOTE

In this essay the writer has said nothing about the question of Inspiration; it has seemed to him unnecessary. Finally, the Bible will have to be judged as are other books, by its contents. If these approve themselves, standing the test of time and of experience; if in them men find that which, when accepted, supplies a working scheme for life, peace with God, and courage in the presence of death,—then theories of inspiration become subjects of interesting inquiry, but they are not vital. A genuine faith in Christ will not be gained through the acceptance of the inspiration of the four Gospels; nor will it perish because those Gospels lack some of the

notes which, *à priori*, have been laid down as essential to it. It is possible to believe in the inspiration of the Bible without being able to formulate a theory that shall embrace all the facts, even as one can believe in the existence of light without accepting in its entirety the undulatory theory of its propagation. In a word, the fact and the complete rationale of it are not to be confounded. It is enough if men come to see that in some unique way the Bible contains the word of God.

III

THE BIBLE VIEW OF SIN

By ALFRED CAVE

III

The Bible View of Sin

Time was when the doctrine of sin dominated every system of theology, and thus, filtering down through pulpit and school, bulked immensely in the popular mind. To-day it is commonly asserted that neither the doctrine nor the fact of sin has its due place in human thinking. To what extent such a statement is true, possibly He only knows before whose searching gaze lie bare the secrets of all hearts. One thing is certain, the subject of Sin is one of ceaseless interest and importance, opinions thereupon colouring the entire range of Christian truth as understood by us. Nor needs more be said by way of emphasising either the high significance or the awful fascination of our theme. Moreover, if truth is to be found anywhere upon so appalling a relation of man to God, it will be found in the Bible.

I

First, then, let us consider what the problems are with which any Doctrine of Sin deals.

And in order to smooth the path to the following discussion, let a few distinctions be made. By Sin, for instance, is meant here, transgression of the divine law by a moral agent. The definition is provisional, and will need elucidation later on; but for the present two things are regarded as constituting an act sinful, namely, transgression of a law by a moral agent, and transgression of a divine

law. There can be no sin where there is no responsibility. The transgression of a human law only becomes sin as well as crime when the relationship of the crime to God is considered. Again, Evil is what is painful; Good is what is pleasurable. But there are varieties of evil as there are varieties of good, these varieties being classifiable according to their source. Thus there are physical evil and physical good, those pains and pleasures, namely, which have their source in the natural world; and there are moral evil and moral good, those pains and pleasures which have their source in the moral world (wherein it often happens that physical evil is moral good, and physical good is moral evil). Further, there are spiritual evil and spiritual good, those pains and pleasures which have their source in the spiritual world.

Now, concerning all these three classes of evil many problems arise, problems which have occupied and agitated man since ever man was.

For physical evil is known to every man. From the cradle to the grave pain dogs his steps. The life which begins in a cry ends in a moan. The painful, what is not physically good, meets us everywhere. In nature there is storm as well as calm, disease as well as health. Trees feed, but poison; beasts toil, but tear. The genial sky sometimes thunders, and the quiet sea often raves. All around, in man's physical environment, are enormities, discords, dangers. Hail ruins his husbandry; epidemics destroy his cattle; lightning rives his dwelling. Moreover, within as well as without his bodily frame, man is conscious of improprieties of desire, faults of appetite, taints of blood. To physical pain of multifarious kinds man knows himself to be heir. Now what do all this disorder and misery mean, man cannot but ask.

And moral evil is also known by man. As Harless has said, in his *Christliche Ethik*, "When man, laid hold of

by the power of conscience, sits in judgment on himself, he exercises this judgment both *in* the thoughts of his heart and *on* the thoughts of his heart." Conscience delivers judgment on the state of our hearts. For painfully enough our state of heart does not seem to us identical with ideal goodness. All men know what it is to have an evil conscience, a moral pain. Man is also conscious of the powerlessness which has fallen upon his will. Conscience denies to man the power of wholly, and of his own motion, overcoming the selfish dictates of his heart. In short, man does as well as suffers evil, causing pain to his neighbours. Thus, if, on the more exalted side of his nature, man is superior to the animal, this very superiority makes him the more consciously and poignantly the subject of evil. The higher his moral life, the direr is the reaction; the deeper the suffering, the intenser the agony, and ultimately the more excruciating the final separation of death. Now what means all this refinement of pain, consequent on moral relations, man cannot but ask.

And spiritual evil is known to man. He is environed by a spiritual realm, connection with which for the most part causes him pain. The savage peoples the universe—trees and earth and stars and all things — with spirits whom he dreads, and whom he strives to propitiate. A Hindu fears to go out after dark lest he meet a demon. Nor, as we rise in the scale of existence, do we find the consciousness of spiritual evil lessening. The two facts known to all men—of the existence of God, and the reality of conscience — transform breaches of human order into transgressions of divine law, rendering man despondent and even despairing in face of the spiritual facts of life. Whence comes spiritual evil, therefore, he cannot but ask. What is its story? Is it neutralisable? Is it capable of entire conquest?

Problems indeed there are, pressing and profound, in

connection with human suffering. Personally aware of these common facts of physical and moral and spiritual evil, often conscious of sin, man has inevitably asked—why such things are? What are their causes? What are their consequences? Are causes and consequences related? Is physical evil an effect of moral evil, or does moral evil result from physical? Is there any causal relation between spiritual evil and moral evil, or between spiritual evil and physical? Does man necessarily suffer because he has a moral nature, or because he has a physical nature, or because he has a spiritual nature? Does the present state of our race show moral improvement or moral degeneracy? How are we to account for man's habitual self-dissatisfaction? Is man a free agent? Was man ever a free agent? To what extent does moral freedom exist in man to-day? Why should the existence of an external law be so necessary to human welfare, when an external law presumably should have nothing like the cogency of conscience? Why do the moral judgments of men vary? How can moral and spiritual disabilities be removed? How, especially, can their inherited consequences be counteracted? How, in short, can man be saved? Inevitably, let it be repeated, the evil experience and the evil environment and the evil practice of mankind have compelled much thought.

And human speculations have been as daring as evil has been patent. Nor has consideration of the causes of evil been a matter of cold intellect merely, or of cool resolve; it has been, even in the savage, associated with emotion the most intense, with terror the most disruptive, with sacrifices the most heartrending, with atonements the most sickening. His frightful inheritance of evil has stirred man's inmost soul, and evoked his most persistent energy. Never failing to observe how powerful nature is for harm as well as for help, never ceasing to reflect how, in human story, darkness and terror and violence alternate with light

and joy and repose, never able to divest himself of the suspicion that a world demonic is always close at hand to annoy and to crucify, men of all classes and ages have made the awful facts of evil, as universal as dolorous, the theme of protracted study. Priests, too, have traded upon the perplexities of man when confronted by the dire problems of evil; rites the most horrible have been invented to at once express and appease mysteries of pain the most appalling.

Nor is it without its interest to observe what solutions have been offered of these ever-present mysteries of physical and moral and spiritual evil.

Whence comes evil? And the savage has often replied, from evil spirits, from devils, from demons, my restless torturers and enemies. That evil is, I know well, both in in me and in my life, says this crude philosopher; that evil comes from the mischief and hate of evil spirits, to propitiate whom is manifestly my interest and my necessity, I verily believe. How natural such a reply has been, will be best understood by the careful student of the religions of the native races of Africa, America, and the South Seas (what are technically called the "animistic" faiths). "To the minds of the lower races it seems that all nature is possessed, pervaded, crowded with spiritual beings,"[1] says Dr. E. B. Tylor. In such an attitude of mind the readiest solution of the problem of evil is to attribute evil to inimical spirits; and many have rested in the demonic solution of the problem of evil.

Again, whence comes evil? A second reply has been, that evil, whether in the world or man, is due to an omnipotent and omnipresent Spirit of Evil. This is the dualistic creed of Zoroastrianism. Here there is a profounder philosophy. Evil is not due, it is thought, to innumerable disconnected agents, but to one gigantic

[1] *Primitive Culture*, by E. B. Tylor, vol. ii. pp. 184, 185.

spiritual principle behind nature, and even, indeed, to an Evil Principle coequal and coexistent with the Good Principle. It is true that there are many passages in the Zend-Avesta which seem to rise above the idea of the existence of evil as well as of good in the essential structure of the universe; nevertheless, Parsi religious thought never really surmounted this fundamental dualism, which has been so prominently associated with it; and if, in some of the hymns of the Parsi scriptures, the Good Spirit is spoken of as ruling all, in others the Evil Spirit is conceded rank alongside of the Good Spirit. This dualism, too, has appeared again and again during the course of Christian history, lying, for instance, at the basis of several Gnostic solutions of the problems of evil.

Again, whence comes evil, spiritual and moral as well as physical, men have asked. And many have replied that evil is inseparable from existence, is the inevitable associate of our bodily life, is consequent upon contact with things material. In this view, life is misery. So have taught both Brahmanism and Buddhism. At the base, indeed, of all Hindu religion is the doctrine that everything is for the worst in the worst of all possible worlds. All the sacred books of India harp on the same string. Their real object is not to investigate truth, but to devise a scheme for relieving the horrors believed to result from bodily existence. Be it remembered, too, that suicide, the gospel of Seneca, is no gospel to the Hindu. A doctrine of metempsychosis aggravates the Hindu doctrine of evil. To commit suicide was simply to pass into another life where the same chains of causes would produce the same terrific misery. To Buddha, also, life is misery. The life of sense, the life of sentiment, the life of thought on its active side, are all evil in the Buddhist view. Nirvana—Perfection—is the extinction of conscious life. In the early Christian world, Neo-Platonism taught the same doctrine, identifying evil

with finite being. The pessimism of Schopenhauer takes its start from the same conception.

A fourth theory of evil remains. It appears in many religions as a causal judgment. It is more distinctly allied to the teaching of a few religions. According to this fourth theory,—evil, physical, moral, and spiritual,—finds its cause in perverted human volition. This view of things underlies the old Greek tragedy. "Orestes, for instance," says M. Maury, "so often represented on the Athenian stage, was the great mythologic type of the chastisement which dogged the criminal."[1] The ancient religion of Egypt, too, insisted strongly upon evil as the punishment of wrong-doing. Renouf is the authority for saying that "the triumph of Right over Wrong is the burden of nine-tenths of the Egyptian texts which have come down to us."[2] The same characteristic theory of evil as punishment for wrongdoing appears occasionally in the Parsi religious books, in some of the Hindu books, and conspicuously in the Koran.

Thus has man striven to solve the staring and gigantic problem of evil by a Demonic theory of things, or by a Dualistic theory, or by a Pessimist theory, or by a Retributive theory. At best, how scant is the solution! how perplexing is the issue!

Here comes in one great characteristic of the Sacred Books of Christendom. The Bible offers a clear, detailed, and consistent theory of evil. Its doctrine of evil is a doctrine of sin.

According to the biblical solution of the awful problem of evil, evil is not associated with all things essentially, but historically. Evil, that is to say, is contingent, not necessary. Evil is an incident—in logical phrase an accident—in the life of the universe. There was a time when evil was not.

[1] Maury, *Religions de la Grèce Antique*, vol. iii. p. 43.
[2] *Hibbert Lecture*, p. 71.

A time is coming when evil shall not be. Thus Zoroastrian dualism finds no place in the Bible, although the truth thus exaggerated of the awful reign of evil does find fitting recognition. Again, an inimical evil world, involving the most earnest wrestling "against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places,"[1]—the truth, that is to say, that there is in the demonic theory,—is clearly recognised in the Bible, whereas the horrible fear thereby engendered in the ethnic mind is transformed into rejoicing that by "the shield of faith . . . all the fiery darts of the evil world" may be quenched. Again, that life entails great misery, the Bible acknowledges more fully than any Oriental or Western theory of pessimism; but the Bible also knows, as pessimism does not, the gradual extinction of sorrow in the Kingdom of God. So, too, the inkling of great retributive principles, which form the salt of the higher ethnic faiths, becomes, on the very threshold of the Bible, clear and full, and even inspiriting. For the biblical doctrine of evil is a doctrine of sin, but a doctrine which declares sin to be, if awful, incidental, and if painful, remediable.

II

Secondly, let us consider at more length how, according to the Bible, evil is but an incident in human history.

According to the Bible man was neither created that he might suffer, nor, having suffered, is his agony incurable. Pain, and especially moral and spiritual pain (physical pain may be a moral or spiritual good), is an accident, not an attribute, of humanity. In proof, consider the distinctively biblical teaching of the primitive state of man. It is true that upon the original state of man biblical and scientific anthropology do not coincide. Of the two favourite postu-

[1] Eph. vi. 12.

lates of modern anthropology, on the one hand, that the primitive condition of man was one of utter barbarism, human development consequently having been from primitive savagery to derivative culture, and, on the other hand, that the religious progress of mankind has been from Fetichism through Polytheism to Monotheism,—of these two postulates the Bible makes no use from Genesis to Revelation. The biblical standpoint is different, and it can certainly cite very many facts in its favour.

The first point in the biblical anthropology is that "in the day that God created man, male and female created He them."[1] The Bible declares for monogeny, not polygeny.

The second point in the biblical anthropology is the dichotomy of man's nature. Dichotomy asserts that man has a dual constitution, consisting of flesh and spirit. Not that this dual conception is exactly equivalent to our common phrases, "matter and mind," "body and soul." The contrast is between the animal and the divine in man's nature, the carnal and the spiritual. Man is regarded everywhere as flesh or animal part, and spirit or spiritual part.

A third point in the biblical anthropology is the creation of man in the divine image. This is a feature in the biblical representation of preponderating import, affecting, as it does, our whole theory of man, and especially our theory of his redemption. Now, what is meant by creation in the divine image? The answer is not difficult. Abstract from the biblical idea of God all those attributes which are exclusively divine, and the answer follows. God, in the biblical idea, is immutable, absolutely perfect, superior to time and space and limitation, omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent, infinite in His wisdom and in His holiness and in His love. Man can be none of these. But God is Spirit—personality that is—self-

[1] Gen. i. 27.

conscious and self-determined. So man was created spirit —personality—at once self-conscious and self-determined. Moreover, man, created in the image of God, resembled God in character as well as constitution. He was pure in intelligence, and therefore could know truth; he was pure in heart, and therefore was capable of sinlessness; he was pure in will, and therefore unbiassed. Well may we be told how, as man stood before his Creator, perfect in every limb, flawless in every feature, with the radiance of intelligence upon his face, with the white flower of purity on his heart, and the magnetism of right resolve upon his brow, the eye of God rested upon him with complacency, and the voice of God pronounced him good.

The fourth point in the biblical anthropology is man's conditional mortality. Life, as we know it, involves decadence and death. It is the peculiarity of the biblical standpoint that at the beginning a means was provided for arresting decay and for banishing death. The remarkable, the profound teaching, is that but for disobedience, which was sin, man's body would not have died. It would appear that the point of view is that had Adam retained his initial integrity, his body might have been developed and transfigured without the intervention of death. Less cannot be meant by the symbolism of "the tree of life." Having transgressed the divine command, man must be banished from the garden, "lest he put forth his hand, and take of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever."[1] So, too, the representation of the Book of Revelation is similar, "Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to come to the tree of life."[2] This idea, described by him as the transmutation of the psychical into the pneumatic body, occurs in the writings of Paul again and again.

A fifth point of the biblical anthropology is the balance

[1] Gen. iii. 22. [2] Rev. xxii. 14.

of flesh and spirit in man as created, the *æquale temperamentum*, as the technical term runs. In man, at creation, there was no conflict, no divarication. Spirit controlled flesh; flesh obeyed spirit. Sensuous impulses and appetites were servants, not masters. There was no inborn tendency to the carnal. Man knew neither disease nor vice nor sin. He enjoyed physical and moral and spiritual health. Yet was this perfection provisional and not fixed, relative and not absolute, critical and not final, mundane and not eternal. "Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, *lest ye die*," [1] ran the divine declaration.

The sixth point of the biblical anthropology was man's capacity for an infinite progress. This is a feature of the biblical teaching much overlooked in the great systems of Protestant scholasticism, to the confusion and concealment of much Christian teaching. Yet, created in the image of God, and perfect for the initial step of his career, there was an image of God into which man had to grow as his nature developed. God-likeness was the goal of his career as well as its starting-point, the final being so different from the initial God-likeness. The divine image after which man was formed, was, in short, partly original endowment and partly destination. Probably the crucial passage in Genesis suggests as much, which runs, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," [2] where the Hebrew use of the prepositions seems to imply, the one, "in," a certain form in which man was actually made; the other, "according to," a certain norm or model according to which he was created. In such a view the verse would signify, "Let us make man in Our image now, to become more and more like unto Us as the ages pass." But, whether this interpretation be warranted or not, the whole story of man's primitive state implies a capacity in man for indefinite growth. If man was pure at creation, he was untried. If

[1] Gen. iii. 3. [2] Gen. i. 26.

he had splendid native faculties, he was inexperienced. His was a limited perfection. He was perfect in the sense of having no imperfections, not in the sense of having attained to all perfectness. The narrative itself, which informs us of man's primary goodness, directs attention to a more perfect state yet to be attained; for, observe the suggestive words, "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, *lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever; therefore,*" etc.[1] At creation, in scholastic phrase, man had received the graces *posse non mori* and *posse non peccare*; he had to grow into the graces *non posse peccare* and *non posse mori.* All the native faculties of mind and body required exercise and development, and a series of worlds formed the environment, material, mental, and spiritual, which should woo to an infinite development, physical, mental, and spiritual.

A seventh point in the biblical anthropology may be stated thus,—that probation was a necessity in man's moral advance; probation, be it observed, but not sin. Probation borne righteously would have implied advance, not decline. "That evil is a necessary transition to good," says Thomasius justly, "is Satan's doctrine and philosophy." At creation the first man was in a state of innocence: he did good automatically. If he was to pass into a state of holiness, in which good was to be done deliberately and of set purpose, there was no other way except through moral trial. Childlike innocence can only become manlike holiness by the agency of temptation. Of course, temptation, itself the necessary passage from unconscious to conscious doing of good, does not essentially involve fall. Resistance to the evil alternative would have strengthened virtue in the same proportion in which submission thereto strengthened vice. Moral progress demanded temptation,

[1] Gen. iii. 22.

a choice of alternatives, and temptation straightway became probation.

An eighth point of biblical anthropology is that uninterrupted communion with God, unbroken contact with the divine, was a cardinal law of human progress. At his creation, in the biblical view, man was more than animal. Man was spirit as well as flesh. Further, as both flesh and spirit, man was sinless, not in the sense of being incapable of sin, but in the sense of being innocent thereof. Man was innocent, but not yet holy. Goodness was by constitution not resolve, instinctive not deliberate, automatic not volitional. At the same time man possessed a perfect moral and physical health, having no tendency whatever to wrong-doing because of either ethical or corporeal taint. Further, as we have seen, man was capable of infinite development. The main lines of that development follow. Innocent man was to become holy,—unconscious, instinctive, automatic goodness becoming a goodness conscious, intentional, and intelligent. Mortal man was to become immortal, conditional mortality passing into unconditional immortality, *posse non mori* becoming *non posse mori*. Inexperienced man was to become mature, all his faculties entering upon a persistent and continuous development by means of constant exercise in the physical, mental, and spiritual worlds. Here an important question arises. To human advance is exercise the only requisite? Does the worthy growth of human faculty demand a divine co-operation? Is the gift of a divine energy as indispensable to human development as is human activity? The biblical reply is clear, as profound as lucid, and as true as subtle. If man was to become deliberately holy as well as instinctively innocent, this ethical development could only supervene upon the constant co-operation of the Spirit of God with the spirit of man. If immortality was to ensue, the postulate is a constant divine inspiration.

If the bodily and mental development of man find their food and air and raiment in the physical and moral environment into which man was divinely introduced, none the less a balanced and perfect growth, bodily, intellectual, emotional, volitional, religious, demands the environment of spiritual suggestions and forces; in other words, demands uninterrupted communion with God. The most vital condition of balanced and complete human culture, was sustained fellowship with Deity.

The last point characteristic of the biblical anthropology is that parentage was conferred on man. Concerning Adam it is said, as we have seen, "And God said, Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness." [1] Concerning Adam's son it is said, "And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image." [2]

In these biblical teachings concerning man lies, it is believed, a profoundly true philosophy, the common ignorance of which renders so much modern study of man an inadequate solution of the problems presented by human life. But whether this be so or not, our contention is surely proved to the hilt, that sin, in the biblical view, is incidental and not essential to human story. What once was not, some day may once more not be.

III

Thirdly, let us consider the origin of sin in man, according to the biblical representation.

Unde malum et quare, many have asked besides Tertullian. From the dawn of civilisation the origin of evil has excited the curiosity, and exercised the ingenuity of philosophic minds. But, be it observed, in this essay we are not concerned with the perplexing problem of the

[1] Gen. i. 26. [2] Gen. v. 3.

origin of evil. Nor are we concerned with the several solutions of the stupendous problem which have been proposed during the course of history, allusion to which has been already made. Our concern is with the origin of sin in man, according to the Bible.

For the origin of human sin (where by sin is meant transgression of the divine law), the Bible conducts us to the opening chapters of Genesis. To what extent the so-called story of the Fall of Man is simple fact, or parable, is a question of slight concern here. After all, it is but a minutely different thing to say that the narrative of the Fall is bare fact, or to say that the narrative is fact under the guise of parable. It may have pleased God to reveal truth to us by parable in the Old Testament as well as in the New. The important thing is, not whether we have literal fact in every detail, but whether, in reading, whatever be the literary dress, we think *nolentes volentes* of innocence and immortality and God, not without longing, and whether, whatever be the literary dress, we think *nolentes volentes*, and not without pain, of innocence lost, and immortality jeopardised, and God estranged.

The essential features of the origin of sin in man as told in the Bible are as follows:—

At creation man was in a state of innocence. Good he did instinctively.

Next, man, such was his constitution, could only pass from a state of innocence, that is, of instinctive goodness, to a state of holiness, or deliberate goodness, by conscious choice.

Choice involves alternatives.

Alternatives were offered by the utterance of an express command, which might, on reflection, be obeyed or disobeyed.

In the free exercise of choice, man disobeyed, and thus sin, conscious disobedience of the divine will, entered into the human sphere.

Further, although the suggestion to disobey was not self-originated, temptation was not necessarily fall; temptation to disobey is not necessarily disobedience.

Nor does the course of the temptation, indubitably subtle though it was, so palliate the act of disobedience as to excuse it. The story of man's first disobedience is the story of so much of man's later disobedience. An appeal is made by the tempter to an innocent appetite, accompanied by the foul suggestion that the means of gratification are arbitrarily withheld. The appeal is sympathetically listened to, the selfish and anti-divine attitude commencing. Then the tempter pursues his advantage by a denial of the divine veracity, and by charges against God of jealousy and wrong, answered by the woman by further self-isolation and antagonism to God. Then, in rapid sequence come the familiar stages of unbelief, pride, lust, fall. The general truth of the story, as witnessed to by the human heart, is simply marvellous.

Moreover, dubious as some are to-day (for reasons which need not be discussed here) concerning the truth of the fall of man, as represented in Genesis, there is another element in the case which must not be overlooked. The fall of man is the postulate of the entire Bible. It underlies the narratives of the patriarchal age; the law assumes it everywhere: the utterances of the prophets require some such original. "Thy first father sinned," says Isaiah, "and thy interpreters have transgressed against Me."[1] Said Jesus to the Pharisees: "Ye seek to kill Me. . . . Ye do the deeds of your father. . . . Ye are of your father the devil, the lusts of your father your will is to do. He was a murderer (manslayer) from the beginning. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the liar's father."[2] As for Paul, he bases his very systematic teaching upon this very postulate, explaining sin by

[1] Isa. xliii. 27. [2] John viii. 44.

the sin of the first man, and declaring most distinctly that the universality of sin and of death among men stands in unbroken connection with the sin of the first man.[1] Finally, in the Revelation, the cycle of human history completes itself by the restoration of Paradise, where sin is no more, where the curse is abolished, and where the tree of life is restored.[2]

There is also a remarkable self-consistency about the whole biblical presentation. Study it carelessly, and objections crowd in upon the mind; study it closely, and the objections vanish. For instance, let the question be asked, why did God permit sin? Is not the answer evident on the biblical data? A mechanical world may be sinless; a moral world, in the very nature of the case, may be sinful. Where there is choice, there may be the choice of evil. If God would create beings who should intelligently seek His glory and fellowship, He—be it said with all reverence—must take the risk; for creatures, who are free agents, may prefer to use their intelligence to ignore His honour and refuse His friendship. Again, if it be asked, how could a holy being fall? the answer is again given in the biblical data. "Holy" sometimes means instinctively righteous, and sometimes deliberately righteous. Undoubtedly it is better to restrict the word holy to intentional and conscious doing of good; but the use of the word for automatic goodness causes the difficulty so often felt in the sin of a holy being. Really there is no possibility of conscious holy act until there is also a possibility of conscious sinful act. Or again, if it be asked, why God did not restrain Satan from tempting, the question is seen to be irrelevant. Whether Satan was the tempter or not, if man was to become a conscious moral agent, he could not but be placed in circumstances of temptation, temptation being

[1] Compare especially Rom. v. 12–21, and 1 Cor. xv. 21–49.
[2] Rev. xxii.

the presentation of alternative good and evil to a free agent. However, as has been said, temptation is not fall. If Satan had spoken subtly, God had spoken solemnly.

IV

Fourthly, let us consider the consequences to the first sinner of his sin, as biblically presented.

"And the Lord God said, Behold, the man has become as one of us, to know good and evil."[1] Man had passed from the stage of instinctive goodness (instinctive and unconscious because, as yet, no contrast of evil had presented itself) to a state of deliberate knowledge. But the knowledge had been terribly gained. The knowledge of good and evil man had won was a diabolic and not a divine knowledge. Instead of good being act and evil being the contrasted idea, evil was act and good was idea. Probation had begun, but fall as well. Good was known by experience of evil, whereas evil might have been known by an experience of good.

Man had sinned,—had broken the commandment of God. Consequences were immediate; sin became guilt. Upon transgression of the law, liability to punishment straightway ensued. That punishment, which was instant in commencement, took a twofold form,—the ground was cursed, man's environment changing, and the penalty of death was pronounced, death really being all that evolution of pain which became consequent on God's relinquishment of man to his own devices. Expulsion from the Garden meant, whatever else it signified, access to God barred, a fact with many consequences.

Let us think this out in the light of the previous exposition. The characteristics of man at creation were, as we have seen, monogeny, or the creation of a single pair,—

[1] Gen. iii. 22.

dichotomy, or a constitution consisting of flesh (or animal part) and of spirit (or divine part),—creation in the divine image, or creation as a free and intelligent being,—conditional mortality or mortality only upon sin,—the *æquale temperamentum*, or the equipoise of flesh and spirit,—a capacity for infinite growth on many sides,—moral development by probation,—growth into the stature of the perfect man by ceaseless divine co-operation with human endeavour—and parentage. Upon parentage, nothing needs be said for the moment. Upon the facts of man's creation as a single pair, as flesh and spirit, and in the divine image, no change is produced by sin; they remain facts, whether man has sinned or not. But upon the remaining characteristics effects are produced by sin of a most vital kind. Mortality is no longer conditional; the balance of flesh and spirit is disturbed; growth becomes infinite retrogression from the divine image. Upon these dire consequences of transgression more must be said presently; but already it is evident that immediately upon the first sin mortality supervened; the preponderance of the flesh commenced; and development apart from the divine co-operation began its awful course. Upon sin followed guilt; upon guilt followed penalty, the penalty being, as we shall see more clearly presently, death (in a frightful inclusive sense).

V

Fifthly, let us consider generally the consequences of sin upon our race, as biblically presented.

Thus far our analysis of the biblical teaching has been of a somewhat simple kind, but more profound and staggering problems await us. For instance, if the growth of sinful habit is sufficiently alarming, there is a development of sin more disconcerting still. The fact of parentage cannot be longer put out of sight. By the hereditary relation sin

in the individual becomes sin in the race. The moral disturbance which affects the parents, in due course affects the offspring. That there is such generic sin is a profound characteristic of the biblical teaching.

At the outset of this discussion sin was defined as transgression of the divine law by a moral agent. But must this transgression necessarily be conscious? Conscious transgression of the divine law by a moral agent is, as we have seen, certainly sin. But does transgression of the divine law by a moral agent cease to be sin if it is no longer conscious? Is the hardened and habitual and unconscious transgressor also a sinner? Nay, more, is the new-born child a sinner too? Does the hereditary relation involve the child in sin prior to its own sinful acts?

The Bible reply is clear: "There is no distinction; for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God."[1] Nor is this utterance of Paul's individualistic. That transgression of the law of God, on the part of moral agents, is sin, whether the transgression be conscious or unconscious, is just one of those profound truths binding the whole of Scripture into one great unity. Sin is *chattath*, a swerving from the *direct* rule of life; *awon*, a bending from the *right* rule; *peshar*, a breach of the *covenanted* rule; *hamartia*, a deviation from the *straight* rule; *anomia*, a refusal of the *ordered* rule; *asebeia*, a forgetting of the *pious* rule; *paraptoma*, a trespass against the *declared* rule; or, omitting all the varying figures, sin is transgression of the divine rule of life, conscious or unconscious. Unconscious as well as conscious transgression of law is sin. There is a state of sin as well as an act; there is a habit of sin as well as a single sinful deed, or a succession of single sinful deeds. In medical phrase sin is symptomatic as well as idiopathic. Thus, throughout the Old and New Testaments, even good men are regarded as sinful, and their common characteristic

[1] Rom. iii. 22, 23.

is abasement before God, a conspicuous feature in the Psalms and in the Prophets. Again, the New Testament phase of experience is always represented as commencing with repentance.

But this awful conception of sin appears, so to speak, from the first page of the Bible to the last. Very early does the testimony come, "the earth was also corrupt before God; and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was very corrupt: for all flesh had corrupted His way upon earth";[1] but the testimony goes on to add, "And God saw the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and *that the whole imagination of his heart was only evil continually*," or, in another phrase, "*the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.*"[2] This habitual disposition is especially depicted in the line of the descendants of Cain, and in the line of Ham, and in the line of Lot.

Observe, too, the teaching of the Levitical Law. It is true that a great modern writer has expressed himself in the following manner. "Sin," he says, "is not simply a religious, but a specifically Christian notion. . . . Judaism knew crime, which was an offence against the God who had instituted the State, and uncleanness, which was an offence against the ritual of the temple or the traditions of the schools; but there was too little of the spirit and the truth in its Deity to enable it to comprehend the awful idea of sin. Indeed, nothing so marks the Levitical system, as a whole, as its inadequate sense of sin and its consequent defective notion of sacrifice."[3] But does not such a view overlook some characteristic facts of the Levitical system? And is uncleanness adequately described as an offence against the ritual of the temple or the traditions of the schools?

[1] Gen. vi. 11, 12. [2] Gen. vi. 5, viii. 21.

[3] A. M. Fairbairn, *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 454.

For consider, on the one hand, the Levitical references to impurity and uncleanness. The laws of purification are a very distinct and striking branch of the great legal code, and they have an important bearing on the subject before us. Under the Law, certain physical conditions debarred their subject from approaching the sanctuary. "Moreover, the soul that shall touch any unclean thing, as the uncleanness of man," so ran the Law, "or any unclean beast, or any abominable unclean thing, and eat of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace-offerings which pertain to the Lord, even that soul shall be cut off from his people";[1] and what was said of the peace-offerings applied to all divine service. There were, then, certain physical conditions which rendered their subject "unclean"; and the "unclean" were excommunicated from the privilege of the Israelites, whether priest or common person. Further, these forfeited theocratic privileges were restored upon the dutiful fulfilment of the ordained rites of purification. Now, be it observed that uncleanness arose from contact or association with a human or animal corpse, from the normal or abnormal action of the generative organs, from leprosy or proximity to a leper, and from certain duties connected with the ceremonies of the Day of Atonement and the slaughter of the red heifer, the ashes of which were used in removing the contamination of death. Under one or other of these classes all the numerous rites of cleansing may be placed. Let these several classes be carefully examined, and the fact straightway appears that "uncleanness" was not the consequence of deliberate wrong-doing, was not, that is to say, the result of a sinful act, but was, as far as the subject of it was concerned, involuntary, or, at least, so interwoven with the present constitution of things as almost to deserve the name of involuntary. Childbirth, for instance, was in the nature of things; so were the functions

[1] Lev. vii. 21.

and disorders of the generative organs. A man could not help leprosy attacking him. To minister to the dying and dead must be the duty of someone. And, as regards the marriage relations, the ideal of the Jew was neither a virgin nor a childless life. The notable thing, then, about this Levitical "uncleanness" was, that it was contracted in ways never declared by the Law to be themselves flagitious. To be unclean followed from the natural course of things. Moreover,—and the fact is striking,—uncleanness was not only consequent upon the constitution of things, but it was incidental to those ceremonial or natural processes which, according to the Levitical view, stood in most intimate connection with sin. In a word, "uncleanness" was the remote consequence of sin. It pointed to generic sin, to sin as state. Those who sinned with intent became parents of children who unintentionally sinned. The proof is easy. The several rites of cleansing were reducible, as we have seen, to four classes,—those which concerned contact with the dead, action of the generative organs, leprosy, and certain prominent sin-offerings. Of the last class more need not be said; the scapegoat and the red cow were so manifestly the bearers of human sin. But consider leprosy, that living death; it was always considered by the Jew as a most awful embodiment of the results of sin. The fact is that the Levitical doctrine of uncleanness, uttered in pathetic form, for all who seriously examined it, the truth that association with the sinner is sin.[1]

And consider, on the other hand, the Levitical atonement for sins done inadvertently. For sins done deliberately and with a high hand there was no atonement provided. For open rebellion, blatant sin, the Law provided no atonement. Nevertheless, the Law ordained a whole series of atoning sacrifices, which were called sin-offerings.

[1] Compare *The Scriptural Doctrine of Sacrifice and Atonement*, pp. 98–100.

The point to be seized is, for what faults were sin-offerings presented? The answer is distinct, for sins of ignorance and a few analogous sins. The very name is suggestive, for what are sins of ignorance but unconscious sins? Is it not a very remarkable fact that the Levitical Law made so much of these sins of ignorance, and emphasised so strongly the need of atonement by blood for these sins of ignorance? Wherever the contents of the Law were known, object-lessons innumerable were given that man, as man, was under sin, and that, whether his sins were acts or habits, conscious or unconscious, personal or generic.

A similar testimony is borne by the psalmists and prophets: "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."[1] "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are habituated to do evil!"[2] But this point of view is not peculiar to one book or one period; it pervades the entire Old Testament literature. At the commencement of the history there is described the moral fall of man, necessitating a sinful development of the entire race. In the Old Testament sin is an habitual presence in all men.

The same thing is true in the New Testament. The conception of sin as a universal breach of the law of God underlies the entire presentation of truth. Hear the words of Jesus: "And He called the multitude, and said unto them, Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. . . . Do ye not yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts,

[1] Ps. li. 5. [2] Jer. xiii. 23.

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murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies."[1] Or again, "Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. O brood of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things."[2] Of the parallel teaching of Paul and John, it is surely needless to give examples. Their testimony is identical. "Through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned."[3] "The whole world lieth in evil:" *Ὁ κόσμος ὅλος ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ κεῖται.*[4]

Thus, then, with respect to the two great disputants of the fourth century of our era, the Bible sides with Augustine, and not with Pelagius. To Pelagius sin was simply *peccatum voluntatis*, a sinful act, or a series of sinful acts, each the free determination of a free will. According to Augustine, sin was in the first man indubitably a fault of will, but in every subsequent man a fault of nature as well. To the *peccatum voluntatis* should be added a *peccatum originis*, a *peccatum originale*. So far Augustine was surely correct, though he pushed his conclusions to unwarrantable issues, into which we need not follow him. Such is the solidarity of man, that if the parents sin, their children are involved in the sin and the consequent ruin.

VI

Sixthly, let us consider the generic results of sin more carefully.

[1] Matt. xv. 17; Mark vii. 19.
[2] Matt. xii. 33-35.
[3] Rom. v. 12.
[4] 1 John v. 5.

Sin produced many changes. These modifications might be suitably tabulated as those produced upon God, those produced upon the cosmos, and those produced upon man. Interesting as the fuller study of the consequences upon God and the cosmos would be, space only permits a rapid survey of the third class of changes. Even the consequences of sin upon man are desirably subdivided for study. For there are the consequences of sin upon the first man, as we have seen, and—a more perplexing study—there are the consequences of sin upon his posterity. Further, sin in man's posterity may be regarded either as the generic consequences or (seeing that the whole discipline of life addresses itself to bringing each man into personal relations with the spiritual sphere) the personal consequences. At anyrate, such a line of treatment will tend to clearness, as will soon be apparent.

The generic consequences of sin, then, are those which are visible in every child of Adam. They are depravity, sin, guilt, penalty. Presently we shall see that death is the one penalty, depravity being but a phase of death.

The consequences of the sin of Adam could not end with Adam. There is a solidarity in the human race. Man being endowed with the faculty of propagating his kind, the consequence of Adam's first sin and of his sinful habit passed to his descendants. In the language of the great theologians of the sixteenth century, *peccatum originans* became *peccatum originatum*. From generation to generation the consequences were transmitted, throwing a tremendous emphasis of experience upon the ancient words: "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation."[1] Now, as has been said, these generic consequences of sin may be conveniently surveyed as universal

[1] Ex. xx. 5.

depravity, universal sin, universal guilt, and universal punishment.

And, first, of universal depravity.

By depravity is meant a depraving, a degeneracy, a deterioration, a lowering of tone, from father to son, and from age to age. The *æquale temperamentum* is no more. Health, sanity, has gone: the *mens sana in corpore sano* is an ideal to be dreamt of only. Depressed function is everywhere,—a depression of function increasing with the ages,—showing itself in the body as debility and disease and death; showing itself in the soul as depraved perception, depraved intellect, depraved heart, depraved will; showing itself, in other words, as dulled intuition of the true, the beautiful, the good, the divine, as fettered freedom, as enslaved intellect or sensuality, as perverted heart or selfishness. Together with this false and accentuated love of self comes a falsified and insubordinate love of God. In short, depravity is a depravity of all functions; as Melancthon expressed it, "A perpetual decline of nature, an inward disorder." And this depravity is universal. In this belief the teaching of the Bible harmonises with deliverances of teachers of heredity. If Job say, "Oh, for a clean thing out of an unclean; there is not one";[1] David says, "There is none that doeth good, no, not one";[2] and an Isaiah, "All we like sheep have gone astray";[3] and a Jeremiah, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and woefully sick";[4] and a Paul, "For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing."[5]

Besides, the biblical position has commended itself (quite unconsciously apparently) to many who have approached the staring problem of man's nature from a purely philosophic standpoint. A Plato writes, "Men do more evil than good, beginning even from their childhood"; and, in

[1] Job xiv. 4. [2] Ps. xiv. 1. [3] Isa. liii. 6.
[4] Jer. xvii. 9. [5] Rom. vii. 18.

another place, "The cause of corruption is from our parents, so that we never relinquish their evil way, or escape the blemish of their evil habits." A follower of Plato, as John Howe reminds us in his *Living Temple*, described the experience of man emblematically by speaking of "a potion of error, proffered to every man at his first coming into the world, whereof all drink." Kant reminds us of "a radical evil in human nature," and Comte uses a parallel phrase, and speaks of "the radical imperfection of human nature." "No man," says John Howe, "that takes a view of his own dark and blinded mind, his slow and dull apprehension, his uncertain, staggering judgment, roving conjectures, feeble and mistaken reasonings about matters that concern him most, ill inclinations, propension to what is unlawful to him and destructive, aversive to his truest interest and best good, irresolution, drowsy sloth, exorbitant and ravenous appetites and desires, impotent and self-vexing passions,—can think human nature in him is in its primitive integrity." How innumerable are parallel opinions! All we know of ourselves and man compels the feeling—

> "He finds a baseness in his blood
> At such strange war with what is good;
> He cannot do the thing he would."

The fact of depravity compels attention. It is true that extravagant words have been made by some respecting total depravity, as if every faculty of man was altogether depraved. Such an opinion is an exaggeration. But if there be not in the early stage of human evolution a total depravity of every human faculty, there is a depravity of every faculty,—a fact sufficiently suggestive and awful. If the royal attributes of conscience and intellect are not wholly deposed from seat, they are manifestly reduced in function.

A second characteristic of the generic consequences o

sin is universal sin. So, again, the solidarity of our race would lead us to infer—"If one member suffers, every member suffers with it."[1] But this pervasive disobedience of the divine commands, this inevitable disobedience, has already been considered. Conscious and deliberate sin is not alone recognised as sin. According to the biblical standpoint, father and children are in a common transgression—"all are included under sin."

A third consequence follows. Upon the heel of universal sin treads universal guilt. By sin man has passed, as a race, under the penal inflictions of the divine, and necessarily just, law. In brief, human sin, man's sin as a race, deserves punishment. There may be depravity without guilt, as in the saved sinner; and there may be guilt without depravity, as in the sinner's Saviour, "made to be sin (guilt) for us, who knew no sin";[2] but generic depravity, which is pollution, is associated with generic guilt, which is punition. To this universal guiltiness the Bible constantly bears witness. "Enter not into judgment with thy servant," it is said in the Psalms; "for in thy sight shall no man living be justified";[3] and the words are typical of the entire range of Old Testament experience. "For we have before accused both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin . . . that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God,"[4] says Paul; and the Pauline opinion is not by any means exclusively Pauline. Further, our guilt before God, does not conscience affirm? everyday experience demonstrate? the voice of all nations lament? Has not life shown us that the absence of a sense of guilt is a sure sign of moral decay? We do not enter upon the several theories, so-called of imputation, which deal with the connection of Adam's sin and the guilt of the race, concerning which

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 26.
[2] 2 Cor. v. 21.
[3] Ps. cxliii. 2.
[4] Rom. iii. 19.

indubitably many unwise and many misleading words have been spoken, but to the universality of guilt the conscience of man as well as the Bible testifies.

From universal guilt it is but a step to universal punishment, the universal punishment of death. "So death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."[1] Death is a great generic consequence of sin. Nay,—let the assertion be weighed,—death is the solemn and only punitive consequence of sin. In saying death, we say spiritual loss, we say suffering, we say disease, we say decease, we say the second death. Depravity itself is an effect as well as a cause of sin, being but one phase of that changed relation, that godless relation, which the Bible calls death.

For what is death? Or rather, what in the biblical view is death? The question is of painful interest. The solution, too, supplies just that one unifying idea which imports a philosophical consistency into the biblical utterances, and which at the same time both explains and justifies the divine action towards sinful man. Universal sin brings universal guilt; universal guilt implies universal punishment; the universal punishment is nothing but death; and death is nothing but the consequence of God's doing what man wished Him to do, namely, withdraw Himself. God with man is life; God removed from man is death. The punishment of sin is simply the working out of the spiritual laws of the universe.

For, consider the biblical conception of death.

Recall the following characteristics of primitive man, as previously educed from the biblical record. What, in the divine idea, was the chief end of man? In the familiar words of the Shorter Assembly's Catechism we might suitably reply, "To glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever." Certainly "to enjoy Him for ever." Or let us put the reply into the form of language previously

[1] Rom. v. 12.

used. The divine idea in the creation of man was an infinitely progressive life, under the stimulus and nourishment of a prearranged environment of worlds, physical, mental, and spiritual, and especially under the stimulus and nourishment of unbroken fellowship with God. Balanced and perfect growth during an infinitely graded approximation to the divine likeness demanded uninterrupted communion with God. Sustained contact with Deity was life, growing life, ever-enlarging life, ceaseless realisation of the divine image, constant climbing of the widening avenue whose further end is God.

If God with us is life, God withdrawn is death. Contact broken with Deity is death, growing death, ever-enlarging death, increasing failure to realise the divine image, constant falling down the decreasing avenue whose further end is self at its worst. On man's preferring self to God, God withdraws Himself. Man suffers a frightful spiritual loss, the loss of that vitalising Spirit which would have given full and ever-renewed and ever-enlarging life. Consequent upon this divine withdrawal from man, the *æquale temperamentum* is lost; growth Godward is lost; body rules spirit in ever-increasing measure; with the removal of the vitalising element, disturbance comes of all functions; then ensue suffering, disease, non-sanity, decease, and what is beyond decease. With God is life; without God is death. Death is being without God.

Moreover, all this, which is but inference from the biblical doctrine of the primitive state of man, is also expressly taught concerning the nature of death. The sentence of death pronounced upon man is a sentence, the meaning of which a long and frightful experience could alone enlighten concerning.

Indeed, those cannot but misapprehend many important features of the biblical revelations who understand by death "the shuffling off this mortal coil," the cessation of the

physical functions, the syncope which terminates the connection with this present life. Unquestionably death often means dissolution in scriptural phrase; but dissolution does not exhaust the Bible use of the word. Death in the Scriptures, as in all language, is commonly more than decease. The Scriptures mean by death more than the margin of mortality. Time, for example, would have demonstrated our Lord's words to have been false when He cried in the court of the temple, "If a man shall keep My saying, he shall never see death," if by death He meant decease. Or, again, what meaning on such a supposition could be attached to the words of John: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren: he that loveth not his brother abideth in death?"[1]

An analysis of the biblical usage of the word death reveals the following variety. Frequently death is dissolution, whether natural or violent. Sometimes the word stands for capital punishment, the extreme penalty of the law. From this the meaning is not far off, that death is all or any of the primitive effects of sin; thus, an irresponsive and incapable volition, such as sin engenders,[2] that conflict between desire and fruition which every sinner experiences,[3] the spiritual decadence in its several stages which is the conscious result of sin,[4] the excision from Christian privileges which is the penalty of sin,[5] nay, the final doom of the impenitent, which is otherwise designated "eternal fire," "Gehenna," "the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone"—each of these is denominated death in the Bible. Whatever penalty God has attached to human sin, that is death.

The very first occasion of the use of the word death is suggestive. "Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch

[1] *Scriptural Doctrine of Sacrifice and Atonement*, pp. 312–317.
[2] Rom. vii. 13.
[3] Rom. vii. 19.
[4] 1 John v. 16; Rom. vii. 11.
[5] 1 John v. 16.

it, lest ye die," was the divine proclamation to Adam and Eve,—a proclamation which the issue proved to be completely false if death signified physical demise, but most awfully true if death was all the penal consequences of sin —of alienation, unrest, predisposition to wrong, physical weakness, and all the manifold phases of that painful history which culminates in the grave and what it leads to.

Death, in short, in the biblical usage of the word, is more than decease. Death is a great inclusive term for all that evolution of punishment which is consequent upon the evolution, because of sin, of the divine withdrawal from man. This evolution of penalty is seen primarily in the disturbed balance between flesh and spirit, next in developing depravity and disease, next in decease, and, finally, in that supreme divine withdrawal from man which is called the Second Death.

Certainly there are many problems which such a survey of the generic consequences of sin suggests. But many of them answer themselves as we proceed.

VII

Seventhly, let us more carefully consider the consequences of sin in the individual.

The study, as we have seen, of the consequences of sin conveniently falls under three categories, the Adamic, the Generic, and the Personal Consequences. Under each category, too, as we have also seen, the consequences are the same in kind, namely, sin, guilt, and death. A further fact must also have become evident in our discussion, namely, that in passing from Adam to and through the race, there has been an evolution of sin, and an evolution of guilt, and an evolution of death. Sin, guilt, death; and the implications of death, namely, spiritual loss, de-

pravity, suffering, disease, and decease, are more terrible experiences to Adam's distant descendants than to Adam. The evolution still continues as we pass from the race to the individual, as will be speedily evident if we depict the several stages of sin.

In its complete development the stages of sin are four. First comes the stage prior to moral consciousness, when the generic consequences rule. Next comes the stage of moral consciousness, when the generic consequences still rule, but in increased measure. Next comes the stage of Christianised consciousness, where an accentuated personality makes sin most intelligently and most deliberately personal. Last comes the stage of persistent and wholly conscious sin, the state of obduracy, with its sequence of second and final death. Of each stage in order.

The first stage of individual sin is that prior to the awakening of the moral consciousness. At this stage each personality participates in the sin of the race. Sin, guilt, and death are of the generic type, already sufficiently sketched.

The next stage of individual sin is that subsequent to the awakening of the moral consciousness. There then ensues upon generic sin a sin that is deliberate and personal. Then we become sinners by act as well as by nature. Intelligibly, therefore, a personal penalty follows upon the race penalty. To racial sin, racial guilt, racial death, there is added personal sin, and personal guilt, and personal death. Indeed, seeing that every human being is apparently destined by God to become an actual personality, good or evil, there is no ripeness of development, no ripeness in relation to the divine laws and order, until the stage of moral consciousness and moral freedom is reached.

In this connection, observe how the Bible again and again distinguishes between the first and unripe moral

stage and the second or riper moral stage, between constitutional sin, so to speak, and personal transgression. It was just here that the older orthodoxy went so far wrong. No difference was seen between phases of sin, no difference between phases of guilt, and consequently no degrees were seen in punishment. According to its teaching, eternal punishment equally fell upon the hardened sinner who had deliberately refused the yoke of Christ and upon the unawakened sinner who broke the divine commands very largely in ignorance, nay, even upon the newborn child, who had not deliberately transgressed at all. But, difficult as this whole subject of penalty is, no theory should have shut the eyes against those passages of Scripture which distinctly point to degrees of culpability and therefore to degrees of punishment. To say that all are guilty before God, is not to say that all are equally guilty; and there are passages of Scripture which should have given pause. "I was alive," writes Paul, "apart from the law, once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died";[1] and again, "Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt";[2] and again, "Sin is not imputed when there is no law."[3] Or what mean our Master's words, "If ye were blind, ye would have no sin"?[4] Or what mean these words of His, "It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you,—it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee"?[5] Or these words, "That servant, which knew his lord's will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes; and to whomso-

[1] Rom. vii. 9. [2] Rom. iv. 4.
[3] Rom. v. 13. [4] John ix. 41.
[5] Matt. x. 15, xi. 24; Mark vi. 11; Luke x. 12.

ever much is given, of him shall much be required; and to whom they commit much, of him will they ask the more"?[1] Or why emasculate the Master's dying prayer, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"?[2] Surely, too, there is meaning in Paul's conviction, "However, I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief."[3] The distinctions of the Levitical Law, previously considered, will recur to mind, concerning sins done unwittingly and sins done deliberately, concerning sins of ignorance and sins done with a high hand.

But this stage of personal life, which superadds voluntary to involuntary sin, is not yet the highest development of the personal life. It is a fettered state; it is a depraved state; it is an ignorant state; it is a shortsighted state; it is an enslaved state. Although declarative of personal sin, and therefore of personal guilt, it is not definitive. It does not as such settle the ultimate fate. There is a higher moral condition conceivable, and there is a higher moral condition arranged for in the providence of God.

Upon the stage of ordinary moral consciousness there follows the third stage of supernaturally quickened or Christianised consciousness. By this is not meant what is often called the Christian consciousness, that developed sense of spiritual things which is the product of a deliberate submission to the law of Jesus Christ, and of a deliberate copying of His example. By a Christianised consciousness something much less than this is meant. A Christianised consciousness is a consciousness supernaturally brought to stand upon the Christian plane of things. It is not all the experiences of the developed Christian life, but that elementary experience, without which there cannot be said to be a consciousness of the Christian type at all. By the grace of God, by the inbreathing of the Holy Ghost, by the

[1] Luke xii. 47, 48.
[2] Luke xxiii. 34.
[3] 1 Tim. i. 13.

indwelling of the soul of Jesus,—for all three phrases emphasise the same remarkable fact, namely, the neutralisation of inherited tendency by divine influence,—man is brought to know the Christian standpoint. If it is marvellous, it is matter of fact, that an hour comes, by divine interference in human affairs, when the fetters of the past cease to bind, and when with absolutely free (because with divinely-vitalised) will man is enabled to declare for good or for evil. If there is a generic state of consciousness, in which man's will is identified with the will of the race, if there is a personal state of consciousness, in which man's will takes on an individual character (although that will has but the tiniest margin of freedom, being so fettered by the manacles forged by our entire past); so, in the providence of God, there is a state of Christianised consciousness, when in contact with Christian truth, influenced by Christian life, inspired by the Holy Spirit whom Christ sends into us, the soul is as able to decide for right or for wrong as Adam in his first temptation. This is the stage of crisis. This is the hour of personal free decision. This is the phase of human story in which the depravity which characterises intellect and heart and will is divinely counteracted, in which freedom is as real as probation, in which temptation assumes its most acute phase, and in which the decision arrived at is not only momentous, but may be final. In the mercy of God the wilful soul often has many such critical hours, but the repetition is of mercy, not necessity. In any such experience the man can know, feel, and act as if he were not the subject of the constitutional consequences of generic and personal sin. In such an experience the man can freely decide for God or against Him. There is no hereditary compulsion to reject God's way, for that compulsion has been divinely neutralised; nor is there any divine compulsion to accept God's way, for the decisive choice must be man's, not God's. Alas! too, such choosing

of side can never be subsequently regarded as mitigated by ignorance. The stage of knowledge and freedom attained is such that there can be no complaint if the issue be final. Both divine revelation and divine inspiration have concentrated their forces upon the soul; for the crisis has been produced by the truth as it is in Jesus, rendered intelligible, credible, and forcible by the act of the Holy Spirit. In such a crisis man has, so to speak, come of age. The days of minority are no more. Now, and only now, is he ripe for eternal salvation or eternal death.

The rejection, then, of the life and truth of Christ in this crisis of Christianised experience is really the supreme sin. At the same time, it is a sin against the Holy Ghost. Straightway a series of biblical references, long regarded as well-nigh insoluble, start into prominence, inviting their examination. One variety of sin, and one alone, is described in the Bible as the sin which cannot be forgiven in this world or the next. The biblical passages may be desirably quoted. "Therefore," said Jesus once to the Pharisees, "I say unto you, every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven; and whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak a word against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come."[1] The same ideas rule in the passage in Mark, which runs, "Verily I say unto you, all their sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and their blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme; but whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin."[2] Here, too, come in alarming words of the Apostle John's, namely, "If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and God will give him life for them that sin not unto death.

[1] Matt. xii. 31, 32. [2] Mark iii. 28, 29.

There is a sin unto death; not concerning this do I say that he should make request."[1] In this connection some serious words of Dr. Dorner's deserve careful weighing. "Those," says this eminently sober religious thinker, "whom Jesus warned had attributed His works to the evil spirit, and had thereby calumniated Christ, just as afterwards they crucified Him. For all that He says: Blasphemy against the Son of Man may be forgiven, but not blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. With their sin against Jesus, therefore, sin against the Holy Ghost was not essentially committed, although they were to be warned of the near danger into which they were about to fall. In the commencement of His self-revelation He might be rejected in that ignorance for which He prayed on the Cross. But if the Holy Spirit, who takes of the things of Christ and brings Christ inwardly near to the heart, is blasphemed, that is, if His work within, the divine impression of the Person of Christ which He arouses in man, is despised, is characterised as falsehood, there is no forgiveness more. For this sin, therefore, intercession is not to be made." Indeed, it would appear that the sin against the Holy Ghost is the deliberate rejection of the revelation of Christ when that revelation has been made fully and unmistakably in the individual soul by the work of the Holy Ghost. Not that the sin against the Holy Ghost is to be regarded necessarily as an isolated act. Conceivably it may even be a single act. Rather is this sin, as Dr. A. H. Strong says, "The external symptom of a heart so radically and finally set against God that no power which God can consistently use will ever save it: the sin can only be the culmination of a long course of self-hardening and self-depraving." "Further," continues Dr. Strong, as convincingly as firmly, "the sin against the Holy Ghost cannot be forgiven, simply because the soul that has committed it has ceased to be receptive of divine

[1] 1 John v. 16.

influences, even when those influences are exerted in the utmost strength which God has seen fit to employ." The same point is pressed by the saintly and sainted Julius Müller: "It is not," he says, "that divine grace is absolutely refused to anyone who in true penitence asks forgiveness of sin; but he who commits it never fulfils the subjective conditions upon which forgiveness is possible, because the aggravation of sin to this ultimatum destroys in him all susceptibility of repentance; the way of return is closed to no one who does not close to himself."

The sin against the Holy Ghost, in short, is the climacteric, the supreme sin. For this there is no forgiveness. The supreme sin produces the supreme guilt, and the supreme guilt will be visited by the supreme death.

Hence the tragic side of the preacher's life. "Now, thanks be unto God," the true witness to the gospel of Jesus can say with Paul, "which always leadeth us in triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest through us the savour of His knowledge in every place." Why? "For we are a sweet savour of Christ unto God, in them that are being saved; and" (oh the agony of the thought!) "in them that are perishing."[1] . . . "To the one a savour from death unto death; to the other a savour from life unto life." . . . "And Jesus said, For decision I am come into the world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind."[2]

Sin, guilt, death,—this, apart from Christ, is the sequence for every child of Adam, however immature his moral development. Sin, guilt, death,—this, apart from Christ, is the sequence for him who has arrived at moral decision. Sin, guilt, death,—this, if Christ be not accepted, is the sequence for him who, by the grace of the Holy Ghost, has been brought to the hour of supreme decision. Manifestly the sin increases from stage to stage. Does not the guilt

[1] 2 Cor. ii. 14, 16. [2] John ix. 39.

develop as well? And does not the death vary too? Is the solution of the problems which here press upon us, this—that, in the providence of God, every soul (if not in this world, in the world to come) shall be brought to the hour of supreme crisis, when, with perfect understanding, he will accept or reject the saving help of the Lord Jesus? or is the solution this—that, as there are grades of sin, and consequently grades of guilt, there are grades of death? Perhaps on the evidence presented by the Bible it is impossible to decide. The Great Revealer may have withheld such knowledge from us. Yet would there be a very welcome harmony in His gracious revelations to us, if there were reason to believe that final doom (whatever the second death may mean) will only be reached after the stage of Christianised consciousness had been reached. In that case, as Christ is to be the final judge for all, so, relation to Christ, as interpreted by the Holy Spirit, would be the final test for all.

VIII

Difficult as the problems are which have just suggested themselves, one consequence, at anyrate, follows from our examination of the biblical teaching concerning sin. Vivid light is thrown thereby upon the method as well as the need of salvation. For, as we have seen, sin is transgression of the divine law, and calls for atonement; and sin has resulted in death, and calls for regeneration.

Let us recall the way we have travelled in this essay.

Observe, once again, the first state of man. Man was created morally pure, but peccable; healthy, but conditionally mortal; inexperienced, but capable of a great development. For at his creation man was more than animal. By the inspiration of God, man was spirit as well as body. As body and spirit, man was sinless, not

in the sense of being incapable of sin, but in the sense of being innocent and ignorant of sin. Man was innocent, but not yet holy; his goodness was by nature, not by resolve. Further, healthy though man was, he was liable to death. Further, man was made, not with the limited needs of the animal, but with the power of an endless life and growth. In short, man was created pure, but liable to sin; healthy, but liable to death; inexperienced, but capable of a vast development.

Observe, next, the final state of man in the divine idea. Automatic was to become deliberate goodness. Immortality was to supplant potential death. Rudimentary experience in heart and will and mind, was to become endless growth of heart and will and mind.

Observe, further, the supreme condition of passage from the first to the final state of man. That condition was an uninterrupted communion between God and man. The innocent was to become holy; the potentially mortal was to become immortal; the inexperienced was to become developed: so we have interpreted the biblical position. But how? By the constant co-operation of God with human endeavour. All life was to be a sacrament, an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. That is to say, that if man was to become deliberately holy, it could only be by the co-operation of the Divine Spirit and the human spirit; and if the human body and spirit were to cease to be liable to death, it could only be by the co-operation of the Divine Spirit; and if the spirit of man, the rational spirit, that which differentiated man from the animal, was to grow, as grow it might, intellectually, morally, emotionally, religiously, this growth could only result upon the continued gift to man of the Divine Spirit. The point is notable. In the divine idea, the perfection of human nature could only be attained in union with God, not in human isolation or self-seeking, which

is sin. Man had been created perfect, as the phrase ran in the late sixteenth century theologians, but not perfect in their sense. Man had been created perfect as the first Adam, not as the second Adam was perfect,—perfect, that is, not in himself and apart from God, but only perfect in submission to and in fellowship with the Divine Author of his being. In other words, fellowship, intercourse, communion (whichever term be preferred) remaining unbroken between man and his Maker, deathlessness would result, and, in addition to incapability of death,—whatever death may mean in reference to spirit as well as flesh,—the harmonious interaction of both sides of human nature would be maintained, spirit controlling flesh, and flesh submitting to spirit; moreover, the continuity of the divine intercourse with man remaining, that growth of the entire man would be secured which promised so much more for the future than even the priceless possession of moral balance. Man, flesh and spirit, innocent, sane in frame and mind, though inexperienced as a babe, was to become man, holy, undying, cultured on all sides of his nature, always growing, from father to son and from age to age, towards a more perfect stature, and all by the maintenance of one supreme condition—association with God, vitalisation by the Divine Spirit. Let man preserve his contact with Deity, and he would develop without hindrance or intermission into the fullest likeness with God possible to such a nature. For such progress of man, from his initial to his final God-likeness, this mundane universe was made.

Now observe the lamentable result of the intercalation of sin. Man turned from God, and God withdrew from man. Disordered relations were introduced into the moral cosmos. On man's sinful choice of masters, and the preference of self and Satan to God, the holy wrath of Deity broke forth. It could not but break forth. For God, much more than for man, to recognise sin is to condemn it; to

condemn sin is to condemn it with abhorrence; to condemn sin with abhorrence is to show by suitable act the intensity of the divine displeasure. The holiness of God, that integrity of the divine life which guarantees the integrity of the universe, and especially the integrity of the moral universe; that divine holiness, the preservation and assertion of which secures the well-being and orderly development of the created world,—breaks forth in righteous resentment, in righteous indignation, at human sin. In holy indignation against sin, the Deity permits penalty to fall upon the sinner. That penalty was death; and death is a terrible evolution of punishment, beginning in loss of balance between spirit and flesh, continuing in the domination of the carnal appetites, passing into a new phase at decease, and culminating in what is called the second death. Nay, the biblical conception of death may be probed further. The very cause of death is God's withdrawal of His Spirit from man. The spirit of man, as we have seen, can only fulfil its destiny in constant communion with the Divine Spirit; but when man, exercising his spiritual faculty of will, prefers Satan and self to God, then the penalty decreed by the holy Lawgiver is that the intercourse between the Divine Spirit and the human spirit ceases. As an inevitable result, the human spirit which "lives" with God "dies" without Him.

What the Bible means by the death of the spirit may be understood by recalling what we have recently said as to the divine idea in the creation of man. Man, we saw, was created pure, but not incapable of sin; healthy, but not incapable of death; immature, but not incapable of growth. Further, as we have also seen, man was to become holy as well as pure, immortal as well as healthy, the subject of an infinite and gradedly perfect development. And again, as we have also seen, all this fulfilment of divine plan was—let the fact be emphasised again—to

be consequent upon uninterrupted communion with God. As man's body might grow by its appropriate food and exercise, so man's spirit was to grow by its appropriate food and exercise. So we have seen. But now let us suppose that in moral indignation at sin, the Divine Ruler of all feels it imperative to withdraw His divine aid from man, what will follow? Will not these effects? Man will become unholy instead of pure; diseased and dying instead of healthy; gifted still with a capacity of long-continued development, but away from, and not towards, goodness and God; and all this in increasing manner as the ages pass. How terrible a comment upon such speculations has human history been!

If the discussion is close, it admits into the arcana of any doctrine of redemption. Another element of the case calls for reminiscence. For man is part of a series. No man can be good without affecting others for good, and no man can be bad without exerting a pernicious influence. But even this is not the whole case. One generation has a subtle and penetrative influence upon the generation following. In the constitution of things, the hereditary relation has a wide-reaching effect. A righteous race would propagate a race with a predisposition to righteousness. A sinful race propagates a race with a predisposition to sin. Not only are there consequences which follow individual sinful acts, but there are constitutional effects of sin woven into our very natures.

Now consider the bearing of all this upon the work of salvation. The problem of salvation is to counteract the twofold effects of sin, namely, the constitutional effects and the cosmic effects. Transgression, the breach of divine law, calls for penal suffering in expiation. Depravity, the effect of sin upon man's nature, calls for divine life in neutralisation. Sin, as affecting man's nature, presents a need which must be met before man

can be saved. Sin, as affecting the moral universe, presents another need, which must be met before man can be saved. Thus, then, the problem of saving man is to counteract the effects of sin as nature, and of sin as transgression.

The statement of the problem is the clue to its solution. If the constitutional effects of sin have been produced through generations by the cessation of fellowship between the spirit of man and the Spirit of God, manifestly these constitutional effects require for their neutralisation the restoration to man of the Divine Spirit: death ceases when life commences. This restoration of the Divine Spirit it is the prerogative of Jesus to effect. By such restored vital union between man and God, we, and our children after us, may be increasingly saved from the corruption which is in us because of sin. The counteraction of the effects of sin as transgression, the necessary atonement for the infringed law, is a more difficult problem. But the revelation and act of God make clear to us that the death and sufferings of Christ have fully met the demands of holy law and made atonement. Normal relations are established in the universe between man and God by the atonement of Jesus: the neutralisation of the constitutional effects of sin are effected by the regeneration there is in Christ, a regeneration which is really God with us again.

IV

DEITY AND HUMANITY OF CHRIST

By SAMUEL G GREEN

IV

Deity and Humanity of Christ

I

The most significant fact in connection with modern theological study is the growing concentration of thought upon our Lord's human character and life. Of all forms of serious literature the Divine Biography is the most popular. The Life of Christ is written, in every conceivable form, for critics, philosophers, and scholars, no less for the general reader and for the little child. Endeavours are made, often with distinguished success, to reproduce the details connected with His abode among men, the outward scenery, the habits of His contemporaries, their social and political condition, their religious beliefs and hopes. So far as the environment is concerned, we know Him better than any generation has known Him since the age when He appeared.

But beyond all this, a new and deeper emphasis has been laid upon the "Mind of the Master," the "Words of the Master," the "Teaching of Jesus." Such phrases recall the titles of some of the most eagerly-studied books of our age. There is an increasing desire to understand Him, to listen to Him. Religious teaching, which, within the memory of some, concerned itself chiefly with what He has done for us, now dwells rather upon the antecedent question, Who and what He was. The consciousness of the early Church reappears in modern days; and the discussions of Nicæa and Chalcedon are, with a difference, revived.[1]

[1] See Dr. Fairbairn's *Christ in Modern Theology*. Introduction, "The Return to Christ."

Now it has sometimes been apprehended that the larger and deeper study of our Lord's humanity would in a measure impair the sense of His Deity. There has been a not unnatural fear of approaching too near to Him, of knowing Christ "after the flesh." His Manhood and His Deity have been treated as truths in sharp antithesis, each in turn to be guarded from the risk of damaging admissions. To combine the two great verities into one harmonious whole, has ever been the difficulty of theologians.

It was a difficulty anticipated and frankly met, in the very beginning, by the Apostle John. No other evangelist laid such constant stress upon the divine nature of our Lord. "The Word was God" is the keynote of his Gospel. At the same time, there is no apostle who dwelt with a deeper emphasis upon Christ's manhood. In part, this was rendered necessary by the doketic[1] tendencies already apparent in the Church. But these only give him the occasion of affirming what he evidently regards as a fundamental truth. To deny "Jesus Christ *come in the flesh*," is to be "an Antichrist." Twice is this solemnly asserted, in his General Epistle and in that to the Elect Lady. It had become needful to make this decided stand. The first great heresy as to the Person of Christ was already in the air, and this was the denial, not of His Deity, but of His manhood. Who could best meet it but he who best knew the Master to be divine? The truths are kindred; it is hardly too much to say, identical; standing, not in mysterious and inexplicable contrast, but in perfect and glorious harmony.

II

1. Nor is it from John's testimony alone that we learn the kindredship of these fundamental verities. Much con-

[1] For the apparently pedantic spelling of this word the sufficient reason has been given, that it clearly shows its true derivation from δοκεῖν (seem), not *docere* (teach).

troversy as to the Fourth Gospel has taken its tone from the feeling on both sides that the gist of the question as to our Lord's divinity lay there. Establish the Johannine authorship, and the doctrine of the Word made flesh receives its most powerful attestation; refute it, and we have, it is said, in the Synoptic Gospels only the picture, however lovely and transcendent, of the man Christ Jesus. Is this so? Let us leave the Fourth Gospel (with its companion Epistles) for the moment out of the question; what do we find in Matthew, Mark, and Luke? No abstractions of divine philosophy, that is confessed; no declarations of apologetic purpose; these evangelists never stop to say, "These things are written that ye might believe." Their record of words and deeds is artless and simple, as of men unconscious of the grandeur that lay behind the outward facts. These facts they present, leaving us for the most part to draw our own conclusions. But to what conclusions are we irresistibly led concerning the Son of Man whom they depict?

Before answering this question, let us suppose a case. We may bring up before our imagination a man of surpassing genius, commanding intellect, and immaculate morals; keen in insight, profound in wisdom, and tender in sympathy. Let such a man have taken it as his mission to teach and help his fellows, dedicating himself to the task in a spirit of heroic courage and absolute self-abnegation. Thus he goes about doing good, accessible to all, with unwearied compassion for the miserable, and sublime forbearance even for the sinner whom he rebukes. What personal characteristics, we may ask, would complete our picture of such a man? First of all, beyond doubt, the absence of self-assertion. The spirit, face to face with truth, and awed by its majesty, has no place for personal claims. Egoism disappears. To his disciples he will ever say, "Follow not me, but the Supreme Good; be true and pure, not for my sake, but for the sake of

that which is infinite and eternal. Take my words, not because I utter them, but because they are in themselves divine." That such self-effacement has ever been the spirit of the world's greatest teachers, I need not stay to prove. Or if ever a touch of self-consciousness has intruded upon the soul in communion with infinite truth and purity, the result has been an inevitable self-abasement. "I had heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." "Woe is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips."

How different from all this is the representation of Christ given us in the Synoptic Gospels! He places His own personality always in the foreground: "Verily, verily, *I* say unto you." Among a people that venerated the Law of God uttered from heaven to their fathers, He declares, as though the Mount on which He sat were another Sinai: "It was said to them of old time . . . but *I* say unto you." To the poor and heavy-laden He says: "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." He demands allegiance to Himself as the very condition of entering into life: "Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I confess before My Father which is in heaven." Nay, He subordinates the most sacred relationships of mankind to the service which He claims: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me, is not worthy of Me." He represents Himself as conversant with the sublimest mysteries of truth: "No one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him." Such words, evidently genuine, recorded by those who do not seem to apprehend all their greatness, are not, and could not have been, the words of the wisest and greatest of human teachers. The wiser and greater they might be, the more sensitively would they have

shrunk from making any demands like these upon faith and obedience. In a word, Jesus asks, in entire calmness and simplicity, for a trust and allegiance due to none but God Himself. So in the end of all He says to His ambassadors: "Go ye and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost . . . and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the consummation of the age."

On account of this wonderful self-assertion, the moral perfection of Jesus has been denied.[1] Nor is there any escape from the old dilemma: *Aut Deus, aut homo non bonus.*

And this irresistible inference from the Synoptics is more than sustained by the explicit testimony of the Fourth Gospel. In confining the argument hitherto to the former, I do not in the least undervalue the words of Jesus as recorded by the disciple whom He loved. Only here the task becomes that, not so much of exposition as of defence. Admit this Fourth Gospel, and the witness of the Three is crowned by a series of declarations in which the consciousness of Godhead is apparent in every phrase: "I am the Bread of Life"; "I am the True Vine"; "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life"; "I am the Light of the world." For ages had the devout among the Jews dwelt upon the familiar words, "Jehovah is my Shepherd, I shall not want"; and now here is One who announces, "I am the Good Shepherd." One and another psalmist had cried to the Eternal, "My spirit thirsteth for Thee, the living God"; and, as if in response, One stands up in the Temple and says, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." What must the readers of the ancient Scrip-

[1] See especially F. W. Newman, *Phases of Faith*, ch. vii. In reference to a critic (Dr. James Martineau) who had maintained, from the Unitarian standpoint, the moral perfection of Jesus, Mr. Newman remarks, "My friend ought to publish an *expurgated Gospel*."

tures have made of claims like these? We know how, in fact, they did regard them: and when they took up stones to stone Him, they gave unconscious testimony to the fact, that, in accord with ancient prophecy, the Lord Himself had suddenly come to His Temple. If possible, as Dr. Bushnell acutely remarks, "the very negatives He uses concerning Himself as related to the Father are even more convincing still. Thus, when He says, 'My Father is greater than I,' how preposterous for any mere human being of our race to be gravely telling the world that God is superior to Him!" The wonder is that the disciples themselves who listened to His words did not comprehend all that they implied, until, as the same evangelist records, one of them, in belated but irresistible conviction, exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" The risen Christ accepts the confession: "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." Words could scarcely more expressively claim from the Church of all time the acknowledgment of His Deity.

2. In accord with this conclusion is the language of the Apostles throughout. Apart from their express declarations, the thought of Christ as Divine pervades their teachings. Especially may we note the way in which the Apostle Paul, in reiterated and varied forms, asserts Christ to be his life. It is the definition of the Christian character, to be "in Christ." Now, whatever the full significance of this deep, dark saying, it is plainly inapplicable to one's relation with his fellow-man. *I am in Paul—in John*; how unmeaning would be the phrase! In its unique application to the Master, it must mean this at least—that He, ever present to the spirit by faith, is the ground of the spirit's true life. "Christ in us" is the correlative phrase, expressing an *ideal*, which on the sceptical side becomes but a vaguely beautiful aspiration—

"O may I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence; live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude; in scorn
Of miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
And with their mild persistence urge men's minds
To vaster issues."

This cry of a soul nurtured in a faith afterwards forsaken, might have been learned at the feet of Jesus! Only for the "immortal dead" we look to Him who lives, an all-pervading Presence, a Personal power in the life, teaching us to aspire, and enabling us to live. In a very important sense, Christ is Christianity.

Nor is this a mere theory. We read it not only in the Fourth Gospel, the Synoptics, and the Epistles, but in the great volume of Christian experience everywhere. For surely the history of the Church and the records of missions are sufficient to prove that wherever the living Christ is preached in fellowship with men's souls, demanding faith, obedience, consecration, there is spiritual life. We must go to Him as to our God, else we sadly miss the way. One fact, uniformly and mournfully apparent in the annals of Unitarianism, is its absence of transforming and vitalising power. It *does not convert.* This is simply the testimony of its adherents,—their constant, sorrowful confession. In many cases they are earnest, sincere, devout. They would spend and be spent, if they could only win men's souls to righteousness, purity, and love. Personally, they strive to live near to God, and to learn His will. But when from their secret place of communion with Him, into which we will not venture to follow them, they go forth into the world, it is only too sadly manifest that they bear with them no spell to reach the depths of human conscience, or to raise the spiritually dead. We hear them often pathetically asking why this should be. The answer is that there is but one

gospel for mankind. In one of his most highly-wrought discourses, Dr. Channing powerfully maintains that "Unitarian Christianity is most favourable to piety";[1] but the argument is *à priori* from beginning to end. On its showing, we should expect to find that wherever the Churches had come under Unitarian influence they had become vigorous, devout, filled with spiritual life; that the renunciation of Trinitarian belief had become the signal for new earnestness and larger success in efforts to evangelise mankind; and that the power of Christ to move the world was the most profoundly felt where He was preached and believed in only as a man. It is now more than seventy years since that discourse was preached—a period distinguished by the Church's activities in innumerable directions. In the face of the high claims made by the eloquent expositor of Unitarian doctrine, we are at least entitled to ask, Where are its triumphs to be seen, in the turning of men from sin to righteousness, from darkness to light? The best and noblest men of Dr. Channing's school are the first to confess their disappointment, and often pathetically seek the reason.

A brilliant author of our own day has raised the question anew[2]—Why is it that Unitarianism makes so little progress? And part of the explanation, alas! is found in the remains of *Puritanism* that cling to it. "Unitarianism wants more beauty and more enthusiasm." Yes; "more enthusiasm" without doubt! but the experience of ages has shown that this is to be truly, lastingly enkindled by the passionate presentation of the message of "God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." Here, too, is "beauty," the beauty of a truth everywhere adapted to man's needs, and of a love that wins the world unto itself.

[1] *Works* (1840), vol. iii. p. 163, "Discourse at the Dedication of a Unitarian Church at New York, 1826."

[2] *Unitarians and the Future*, by Mrs. Humphry Ward, 1894.

"If it would be like its Master," continues the gifted writer, "let it speak in coloured, parabolic, stimulating ways, using the natural sensuous impulses for its own purposes, appealing, without fear for itself, to those sources of delight—colour, music, ordered speech, and magnificent action." Hence the appeal to "the young, especially in the Free Churches, to spend time, love, craft, and money in the attempt to make beautiful what they believe." Vain will be the attempt! For, unless we have read amiss the experience of all the Christian ages, no splendour of adornment or pomp of ritual will give life to a Church when Christ as the divine and only Master is not the object of worship, the centre of trust and love.[1]

By a twofold line of argument, then;—from the records of Christ's earthly life, and from the proofs of His presence and power in the individual believer and in the whole history of the Church, we are led to the recognition and acceptance of His highest claims. Testimony and experience alike reveal to us His humanity and Deity as correlated truths, each shedding upon the other its own illumination, and together constituting the light and life of men.

3. Other modes of reaching the same conclusion might be adopted, but are too familiar to make it needful to insist upon them largely here. Much stress has been rightly laid by Christian apologists on the direct testimony of Scripture. In discussions of the subject it is common to find long lists of "proof-texts" on every phase of the argument; and the array of such authorities is unquestionably valuable. Still it is doubtful whether this mode of arguing has not sometimes obscured the real issue. Irrelevant texts have been pressed into service; while opponents have regarded every single critical confutation as a victory on the main question. There was a dreary volume, published more than fifty years

[1] See Browning's *Christmas Eve and Easter Day*.

ago, the object of which was to collect all the passages from the Old Testament and the New which had been supposed by one or another Trinitarian expositor to teach the doctrine of the Triune Godhead or the Deity of the Son, and then to quote other critics belonging to the same school, to show that the text was susceptible of another interpretation. The result was a most promiscuous and bewildering collection of criticisms, but little more. In truth, one might go a long way with these "concessions" without any prejudice to faith. The battle is neither to be lost nor won by such insistence upon details; and on both sides there is the danger of what we may call subjectiveness in criticism. We are told sometimes by the cynical that a man's theological position will determine his critical or exegetical conclusions; that if we only know beforehand his views of the Divine Sonship, we shall know what estimate he will take, for instance, of the authorities for and against the reading "Only-begotten God" in John i. 18; or the vocative translation "O God," or the nominative "God" in Heb. i. 8. No doubt our greatest critics and expositors are mainly free from such prepossessions; but where the stress of the argument is made to rest on individual texts, there is always the danger of unconscious bias, or else of the apprehension that some new development in the critical process should shake the foundations of the faith. Thus a student of the Old Testament will be alarmed lest he should have to surrender the current interpretation of Isaiah's "Emmanuel," or that of "the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father"; or lest the Eternal Wisdom of the Book of Proverbs should be transformed from a personality into a personification; or lest the "goings forth from everlasting" in Micah, or the "Desire of all nations" in Haggai, should be seen to have a merely mundane significance. These are respectively matters for fearless and independent inquiry; and thankful as we are when a fair and thorough examina-

tion of such passages reveals in them the great Mystery of Godliness, we have solid grounds for faith independent of them all.

So, again, in summing up the witness of the New Testament to the Godhead of the Son, we are not dependent for our belief in God manifested in flesh on discovering "whether the line in the O can be detected with the aid of spectacles";[1] nor do we cease to honour Christ as "God over all, blessed for evermore," although what has been read as a declaration concerning the Son should prove on a sounder interpretation to be a doxology to the Father;[2] nor do we renounce our assurance that the Sacrifice which redeemed the Church was Divine, though critics should agree that in Acts xx. 28 we should read "the Church of the Lord." Such points are unquestionably of high interest and importance; but we can afford to discuss them impartially, as those who rest in a faith which Criticism did not give, and cannot take away.

III

It is when we pass from the simplicity of faith to its analysis that the chief difficulties of the question begin. To the happy consciousness of innumerable Christians, God is in Christ. They have no thought of the Divine but that which comes through Him. He has shown to them the Father, and it sufficeth them. Yet the intellect craves some further satisfaction, and seeks to bring under its own laws the method and conditions of the great revelation. Hence the theories which have in different ages aroused the discussions of the Church, and which have been either rejected as heresies or hardened into dogmas. In considering these it is necessary to premise two things: first, that the truth is independent of the theory respecting it. Possibly we may not be able to bring the fact of Incarnation, unique as

[1] F. D. Maurice. [2] Rom. ix. 5.

it is in the history of our race, within our intellectual grasp; but the truth itself, accepted on the Divine warrant, is independent of our ability to do so. And, secondly, it will follow that our faith does not depend upon our power to explain the doctrine. If what may be said in the remainder of this Essay should be shown to be erroneous, faith in the great reality remains unshaken. A mistaken explanation is not a denial. It is necessary, indeed, to proceed very warily amongst the manifold forms of speculation and belief on this subject. Many an inquirer finds himself in the course of his speculations precipitated into some heresy without knowing it. How common, for instance, for the youthful student to incur unconsciously the charge of Tritheism! And perhaps there is a stage in the inquiries of most serious thinkers when the Sabellian theory of a threefold *manifestation* of the One God, rather than the Triune distinction, seems to offer a fascinating solution of the mystery. The first crude stages of individual thought all had their prototype in the early history of the Church; and there is no record in the history of human beliefs more fraught with interest and suggestiveness than the long story of the endeavour to shape a definition of what the Christian consciousness felt from the beginning to be the true "Mystery of Godliness,"—the "open secret of the devout life,"—the manifestation in humanity of the Divine.

Reference has already been made to the foremost place which this Mystery occupied in the earliest Christian thought. As soon as the martyr-age of the Church was over, men's minds turned, as by divinely-given instinct, to the contemplation of the Person of Christ as the basis of all Christian theology. The old simple definitions sufficed no longer, and other questions lay by until this was settled. Even on such momentous subjects as Atonement and Inspiration no theories as yet were formulated. These lay implicitly in the Christian consciousness; but an im-

perative necessity was felt for declaring, with a greater definiteness than heretofore, what the Church believed respecting the Divine Sonship and glory of the Christ. Hence the discussions of Nicæa, and all that followed; culminating in the declaration of Chalcedon, A.D. 451, due chiefly to the genius of Leo the First.

"Following the holy Fathers, we unanimously teach one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, complete as to His Godhead, and complete as to His manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting; consubstantial with the Father as to His Godhead, and consubstantial also with us as to His manhood; like unto us in all things, yet without sin; as to His Godhead, begotten of the Father before all worlds, but as to His manhood, in these last days born for us men and for our salvation of the Virgin Mary, the God-bearer;[1] one and the same Christ, Lord, Only-begotten, known of two natures, without confusion, without conversion, without severance, and without division,[2] the distinction of the natures being in no wise abolished by their union, but the peculiarity of each nature being maintained, and both concurring in one Person and Hypostasis. We confess, not a Son divided and sundered into two persons, but one and the same Son, and Only-begotten, and God-Logos, our Lord Jesus Christ, even as the prophets had before proclaimed concerning Him, and He Himself hath taught us, and the symbol of the Fathers hath handed down to us."

It will be observed that this declaration is merely assertive: it contains no philosophy of the Incarnation. Throughout these contests of early times, it was almost invariably the dissident who constructed theories; while the great body of Christian believers were content to define without philosophising. The Athanasian Creed itself—that document or "hymn" of unknown authorship which summed up the conclusion of the great debate long after the days of Athanasius—does not attempt, as often alleged, to *explain* the mysteries of Trinity and Incarnation. It simply states and restates them, in forms of words carefully chosen to meet the several repudiated theories; and every apparent reiteration contains a side-stroke at some distinct heresy. Nor, apart from its "damnatory clauses," do we know where

[1] *τῆς θεοτόκου.* [2] *ἀσυγχύτως, ἀτρέπτως, ἀδιαιρέτως, ἀχωρίστως.*

to find a more lucid summary of what the Church believes concerning its divine Lord.

The one point to be grasped and held firmly is that expressed by the formula "Two Natures in One Person," a phrase to which modern psychology can take no objection. The language of the Westminster Confession may well be compared with that of Chalcedon—

> "The Son of God, the Second Person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance, and equal with the Father, did, when the fulness of time was come, take upon Him man's nature and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin,—being conceived by the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which Person is very God and very Man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man."

This, it will be seen, is but a restatement of the Chalcedonian formula, and affirms the two Natures in One Person without attempting further definition of the terms. In like manner speak all the great Confessions of Christendom. Each truth stands on its own irrefragable basis of evidence. He is God, He is Man; and yet His whole life attests that in every attribute of personality He is one and the same Christ.

Almost every form of intellectual resistance to this twofold verity has its modern counterpart. This may be said even of Arianism, although to a smaller extent than is the case with other theories. That strange instructive episode in the history of religious thought has passed away, without possibility of revival. Long since has the Arian hypothesis been clearly seen to be fatal to all true *mediation*. "The infinite chasm which separates creature from Creator," writes Ferdinand C. Baur, "remains unfilled, and there is nothing really mediatory between God and man, if between the two there be nothing more than some created and finite existence, or such a Mediator and Redeemer as the Arians

conceive the Son of God in His essential distinction from God; not begotten from the essence of God and co-eternal, but created out of nothing and arising in time." It is not too much to say with Mr. A. J. Balfour, that "such simplifications as those of the Arians are so alien and impossible to modern modes of thought, that if they had become incorporated with Christianity, they must have destroyed it."[1]

Much more specious are the theories of Nestorius on the one hand, and of Apollinarius on the other. These heresiarchs have among the thinking Christians of to-day many followers who never heard their names. Wherever men virtually attribute a double consciousness to the Son of Man, assigning certain utterances and deeds to His Divine and others again to His Human nature, they are implicitly Nestorians. Where, again, they think of the spirit that animated Him as only and altogether Divine, the Logos simply taking the place of man's "reasonable soul," they are unconscious Apollinarians—so far, at least, as modern psychology permits. Both lines of thought illustrate the difficulties into which those are led who seek to make clear to the logical understanding the philosophy of their faith.

IV

Our thoughts on this great subject must, like all true scientific thinking, be conditioned by the facts of the case. There is no topic, perhaps, on which theological preconceptions are permitted to play so large a part in the interpretation of phenomena. We go to the gospel history, not only with reverence and faith, but with a definition of the Divine, in accordance with which we read the whole. Possessed as we are, and justly so, with the conviction of our Lord's Deity, we regard His personal life from that point of view alone. Thus I have seen comments on the Sermon on the Mount which represent the Divine Speaker

[1] *Foundations of Belief*, p. 279.

as having, while He uttered the discourse, outspread before His omniscient view all the philosophies of the ancient world; speaking in full cognisance of the aspirations of Eastern and Western sages after the True, the Good, the Beautiful; knowing their vain thoughts and baffled hopes, and preaching a divine philosophy which would lead mankind in the end to new light and life. In like manner, as He pointed to the birds of the air, and to the lilies of the field, He is thought to have had consciously before Him the marvels of their organisation and growth, with all the records of Creation from the remotest past. As a poet of our day has expressed it—

> "Nature her fine transmuting powers
> Laid open to His piercing ken,
> The lives of insects and of flowers,
> The lives and hearts and minds of men,
> Depths of the geologic past,
> The mission of the youngest star:
> No mind had ever grasp so vast,
> No science ever dived so far;
> All that our boldest guess sees dim,
> Lay clearly visible to Him."

So it *must* have been, it is reasoned, because He was God, and our theory of the Divine so requires. A surer way is to turn to the evangelic records themselves, and to learn from them how, in fact, it was that the Son of God was manifested. We may find some things contrary to our preconceptions; but it is our business to take them all fairly into account.

These facts unquestionably show a certain limitation placed upon the exercise of divine attributes and powers. How far such limitation extended, whether it embraced the exercise of His omniscience and omnipotence, it is not for us to decide by any metaphysical or other *à priori* considerations. We have but to study and fairly to interpret what He said and did.

The Apostle Paul affords us a key to the mystery by his

expressive word, He "emptied Himself"—ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε[1]—a phrase which perhaps more than any other in Scripture engages the best and deepest thought of our time. There is, I cannot but think, on more sides than one, considerable rashness in its interpretation. Kenotic theories are proposed on every hand: that only will abide the test which consists with the facts of the gospel history.

Plainly, our Lord laid something aside. And that this was more than the external manifestation of His glory, seems implied in the very form of the expression. There was something *intrinsic* that it was possible for Him to surrender, remaining still Divine. His attributes, it has been said by some theologians, may be regarded as twofold—immanent and relative. Holiness, veracity, love, were immanent; omniscience and omnipotence relative. The former remained unchanged, the latter might be laid aside or reduced to "quiescence." And thus in the union of the two natures while yet on earth, our Lord took upon Him certain limitations in the one direction, though not in the other. The theory undoubtedly harmonises many facts in the history, although open to the objection that it seems to divide the attributes of our Lord in an arbitrary way. Other thinkers would restrict the statement to the independent *exercise* of His attributes. He chose not to employ them, and entered into a state of entire dependence upon the Father.

It was a proof of His love that He did this, as the apostle so strongly puts it; making the self-renunciation of our Lord the great example of sacrifice for the good of others. Nor less did it display His omnipotence. "The entire process of condescension is a display, not of weakness, but of infinite moral strength. What we should venerate in the *Kenosis* of the Son of God is the triumphant power of an unswerving will, persisting under the utmost pressure of

[1] "Exaninivit"; Vulgate and Beza. Hence the word *exinanition*, which alternates with *Kenosis* in many modern writings.

distress and trial in a morally glorious action. As Gregory of Nyssa well says, 'That the omnipotence of the divine nature should have had *strength to descend* to the lowliness of humanity, furnishes a more manifest proof of power than even the greatness and supernatural character of the miracles. . . . It is not the vastness of the heavens and the bright shining of its constellations, the order of the universe and the unbroken administration over all existence, that so manifestly displays the transcendent power of the Deity, as this condescension to the weakness of our nature,—the way in which sublimity is actually seen in lowliness, and yet the loftiness descends not.'"[1]

Such a view is confirmed by certain distinct features of our Lord's earthly life and history, as recorded by the evangelists.

1. *His Miracles.*—It is unquestionable that both He Himself and His biographers often represent these works as wrought by a *communicated* energy. It is not always so, and so far there is ground for arguing from them to His inherent omnipotence. We might quote His august words to the leper of Galilee, "I will, be thou clean"; His command to the winds and waves of Gennesaret, "Peace, be still"; His cheering assurance to the nobleman of Capernaum, "Go thy way, thy son liveth"; His repeated summons to the dead, "Maiden, arise"; "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise." The utterances are those of a divine authority.[2] But in general His miracles are represented as works which God did by Him. "I can," He said, "of Myself do nothing." "The Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works." His miracles, like His whole life, betokened His constant and indissoluble fellowship with the Father. "God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost and with power; He went about doing

[1] *The Doctrine of the Incarnation*, by Robert L. Ottley, M.A., vol. ii. p. 287.

[2] See Matt. viii. 3; Mark iv. 39; John iv. 50; Mark v. 41; Luke vii. 14.

good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him." Of one memorable occasion it is recorded, "There were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every village of Galilee and Judæa and Jerusalem; and there was the Power of the Lord that He should heal."[1] "The Lord" here is, of course, the Jehovah of the Old Testament. So when He was about to work His crowning earthly miracle, He "lifted up His eyes and said, Father, I thank Thee, that Thou heardest Me. . . . And when He had thus spoken, He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth." Thus emphatically was it shown, "because of the multitude standing around," that the miracle was wrought in the power of the Father. In this respect also He was made like unto His brethren, to whom He said, "He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto the Father."

2. *His Knowledge.*—We are here unquestionably on more difficult ground. It is comparatively easy to conceive the exercise of power to be suspended by an act of will; it is less so to suppose a voluntary abdication of knowledge. How could the Divine-Human cease to be omniscient? The question has sorely perplexed many serious minds, and is perhaps insoluble, our metaphysics not reaching to the comprehension of that unique Personality. We can but employ the method of induction, and instead of reading the facts of the history in the light of foregone theory, must inquire into the facts themselves.

Now, in the first place, there is the distinct and explicit statement that He "increased in wisdom" as well as in stature. A very general way of understanding this statement has been to suppose it to refer to His human intellect only, the divine remaining consciously omniscient. This

[1] Luke v. 17. See Revised Text (*αὐτόν* for *αὐτούς*). The Revised Version hardly conveys the striking force of the original.

view, however, really denies His one Personality; it is a lapse into Nestorianism. Sometimes, again, it has been urged that the growth was only apparent, observers interpreting progressive *manifestations* of His inherent and infinite wisdom according to human analogies—a subtle form of Doketism. The fact in its simple statement requires no such metaphysical solutions. We are told, if plain words are plainly to be construed, that as one condition of the Incarnation, the consciousness of the Son was led on by degrees to the apprehension of truth, both human and divine.

To remove the unquestioned difficulties attending this conception, the theory of Dr. Dorner, author of the *History of the Development of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, demands some notice. He supposes a progressive, gradual Incarnation—a continual "becoming," through the stages of His earthly growth; distinct epochs of this progression being noted in His meeting with the "Doctors" in the Temple and at His Baptism. "The being and actuality of the Logos remained metaphysically and morally unchanged; but Jesus of Nazareth possessed the Logos merely so far as was compatible with the truth of human growth and the capacity of His expanding consciousness. In other words, the eternal personality of the Divine Logos entered into the humanity of Jesus as it grew and became capable and worthy of receiving it. . . . The process of union began with the supernatural conception, and was completed with the Ascension."[1] This attempt, like others, to bring the *Kenosis* within the grasp of human thought, deals with matters too high for us. It is enough to know that with Him the advance of knowledge and wisdom was a reality and not a semblance only.

A second fact bearing in the same direction is the perfectly natural way in which He seeks information on ordinary matters: "How many loaves have ye"? "Where

[1] Dr. Philip Schaff in Herzog, *Encycl.*, art. "Christology."

have ye laid him?" "He came to the fig-tree, if haply He might find anything thereon." The exposition seems forced and artificial, which makes Him ask, as a teacher, for instance, asks his pupil, respecting what was already well known to Him. No doubt there were such questions, in which the answer was thus known—questions put, not to elicit information, but to test knowledge and character: "Whose is this image and superscription?" "Who do men say that the Son of Man is?" "What was it that ye disputed by the way?" But the inquiries to which I refer belong to a different category—sometimes they even contain the element of *surprise*: "How is it that ye sought Me? wist ye not that I must be in My Father's house?" On these words of the Child Jesus it has been well remarked: "It is well-nigh impossible to believe that He knew that Joseph and Mary were leaving Jerusalem, that He knew them to be unaware of His tarrying behind, that He knew the sorrow which they were experiencing in searching for Him, and that He deliberately did what He did for the express purpose of teaching them a lesson."[1]

Then, besides such questions, there are passages which intimate from the very words employed that on many subjects He gained information. Bishop Westcott, in a note on John ii. 24, dwells on the distinction between knowledge absolutely possessed (εἰδέναι) and knowledge acquired (γινώσκειν), and points out passages in which our Lord is said to "come to know" certain incidents and facts. Thus Jesus came to know that the Pharisees had heard of the numbers that His disciples were baptizing; He came to know that the impotent man at Bethesda "had been a long time in that case." He came to know that the people designed "to

[1] *The Conditions of our Lord's Life on Earth*, by Arthur James Mason, D.D., Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, Cambridge, 1896, p. 147.

come by force and make Him a king." At the table of the Last Supper He came to know of a question that His disciples were desirous to ask of Him.[1] Akin to such instances are those in which He is represented as filled with wonder, roused to indignation, moved with compassion. "Wonder," says Canon Mason, "is the shock, whether agreeable or otherwise, of the strange and unexpected. Wonder is the result of a new and significant truth being forced upon our consciousness, which cannot all at once be co-ordinated with what was known or thought before." So in the last dread scene of all, "He began to be greatly amazed and sore troubled," and cried from the depths of His sacrificial agony, "If it be possible."[2]

But, on the other hand, there are instances of His knowing what He could not have learned from any ordinary means of information—proofs of Divine intuition, of Divine insight, of nothing less than omniscience. This appears in the case of many an incident. He knew of the fish with the stater in its mouth, of the colt "where two ways met" at Bethphage, of the poverty of the widow who cast two mites into the treasury. Of these things He spoke, as of obvious matter within His ken. But more: He "knew all men"—their very thoughts. "He knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray Him." He foretold the denials of Peter. He predicted the fall of Jerusalem. Again and again He answered, not so much the words of those who surrounded Him, as their unspoken thoughts. The proofs of such insight led Nathanael to exclaim, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God!" and the woman of Samaria to say, "Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did; can this be the Christ?" Hence, too, the

[1] John iv. 1, v. 6, vi. 15, xvi. 19. To these instances Canon Mason adds Matt. xii. 15, xxii. 18, xxvi. 10; Mark ii. 8, viii. 17.

[2] See on this whole subject, *Our Lord's Knowledge as Man*, by W. S. Swayne, M.A., 1891.

touching appeal of Peter's faith and love, "Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee!"

In full accord with these manifestations of divine knowledge are the claims He makes as a Revealer of Truth. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, We speak that we do know, and bear witness of that we have seen." There was a sphere of knowledge which He retained within His conscious command, including all that was required for the great purposes for which He became incarnate. In the words of Hooker: "As the parts, degrees, and offices of that mystical administration did require, which He voluntarily undertook, the beams of Deity did in operation always accordingly either restrain or enlarge themselves."[1] All that men need to know concerning God He came to reveal; as a Teacher He was infallible; He was "full," not only of "Grace" but of "Truth." He retained what was needful for man's salvation; of the rest He "emptied Himself."

In this light the passage, of which opponents of our Lord's Deity have made so much use, loses its difficulty. Of the day and hour of final judgment He said: "No one knoweth, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."[2] Many have been the expedients employed to reconcile the plain sense of this declaration with the omniscience of the Son. Thus, "He knew not as man, while He knew as Son of God"—implicit Nestorianism. "He knew, but was not commissioned to reveal"; an explanation recognising part of the truth, but for the rest having recourse, for theological reasons, to non-natural interpretation. Such refinements, however, with other more elaborate expositions that have been propounded,[3] appear needless if once we place the passage side by side with those which

[1] *Eccl. Pol.*, bk. v. § 54.

[2] Mark xiii. 32; Matt. xxiv. 36 (R.V.).

[3] For a good summary of these, with patristic and other quotations, see Liddon, *Bampton Lectures*, viii.

assert or imply a limitation. That knowledge, which it was no part of His saving purpose to reveal, did not, in fact, lie within the sphere of His present consciousness. Not to possess it was a part of His voluntary renunciation.

But whenever His work required it, knowledge was complete, infallible. This much He distinctly claims. As a Teacher, He had the confidence which comes of conscious infallibility. The very fact that in one case He declares His limitation of knowledge, implies that wheresoever He speaks with authority there is no questioning His words. The great illustration of this is His testimony to Old Testament Scripture. True, we must be careful to understand the extent of this testimony. We must not quote His authority for conclusions which He nowhere authorises. It is perfectly supposable, for instance, that in His citations and references He employs the current designations of one and another book or section. It was no part of His mission —it would have distracted attention from His message—to set men right on details like these. What is certain is, that He recognises the divine authority of the Sacred Books, and rests explicitly on this for attestation of His highest claims. To disregard their teaching was fatal: "Ye search the Scriptures because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of Me. And ye will not come to Me, that ye may have life." "The Scripture cannot be broken." "It is written," was for Him the end of all controversy regarding conduct or belief. Did the Pharisees err? It was in that they made void the word of God because of their traditions. The Sadducees? It was because they knew not the Scriptures nor the power of God. After He had risen from the dead, He made the great assertion, "All things must needs be fulfilled which are written in the Law of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms, concerning Me." The three parts into which the Jews divided their Scriptures are thus enumerated, and to

all of them, separately and combined, He gives His solemn attestation.

So of individual parts of the Old Testament: "Moses wrote of Me"; "David in the Spirit called Him Lord." Here the validity of the appeal again depends upon the broad fact that these great saints of old had given their prophetic witness to the Son of God. Thus far, it may be admitted, we have no questions before us of such literary criticism as we may well suppose to have lain outside our Lord's cognisance; but we have undoubtedly the truth declared that He came as Heir of all the ages, and that God's messengers in the past were His heralds to mankind. The subject is one that may be followed out into large and various detail. Our Lord's use of Old Testament Scripture is a topic of immense interest, on which the last word has not yet been spoken. But accepting Him as our Teacher, we are distinctly bound to receive "the things written aforetime for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope."

3. *Perfecting through Discipline.* — The sorrows and temptations of our Lord are in some points of view the most mysterious, as they are the most affecting, parts of His earthly history. That the Infinitely Blessed One should be "acquainted with grief" is wonderful; more wonderful still, that the Infinitely Holy should be "tempted in all points like as we are." Hence, with an unconscious Doketism, these solemn declarations are too often explained away. His temptations in particular are virtually made a kind of acted parable—a lesson to ourselves from that which affected Him only in outward semblance. Bodily pangs can be understood; the mystery lies in the deeper anguish of the spirit. There is thus a prevailing tendency with some classes of religionists to dwell almost exclusively on the physical and outward aspect of His suffering—the scourge, the thorns, the nails, the cross. Religious art, as of the

great Italian painters, and many hymns, both ancient and modern, express this tendency. *Ecce Homo!* is the appeal to which the heart most passionately responds,—misinterpreting, or failing altogether to apprehend, the "travail of His soul."

Now the remark made at the outset,[1] that the very apostle who more than any other sets forth our Lord's divine greatness, also insists most earnestly upon His humanity, may with equal force be applied to the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is noteworthy that the great declarations respecting Him as "the effulgence of the Father's glory, and the very image of His substance," of whom it is said, "Let all the angels of God worship Him," and whose "throne is for ever and ever," should lead on directly to the representation of Him as "partaking of flesh and blood," "made in all things like unto His brethren," and "perfected through sufferings." This last declaration is explicit. It is *thus* that He brings many sons unto glory.[2] The statement has,

[1] See p. 158.

[2] Heb. ii. 10: *ἔπρεπεν γὰρ αὐτῷ . . . πολλοὺς υἱοὺς εἰς δόξαν ἀγαγόντα τὸν ἀρχηγὸν τῆς σωτηρίας αὐτῶν διὰ παθημάτων τελειῶσαι.*

R.V. "For it became Him . . . in bringing (*marg.* having brought) many sons unto glory, to make the author (*marg.* captain) of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

The interpretation of this much-discussed passage centres in the aorist participle *ἀγαγόντα*; (1) to whom does it refer? (2) is it prior in time to *τελειῶσαι*, or contemporaneous with it?

1. The suggested reference to *ἀρχηγόν* may be at once dismissed: even if we could suppose that those who in the next verse are called our Lord's "brethren" are here His "sons," in anticipation of v. 13, the order of the words is decisive. The only tolerable connection is with *αὐτῷ*.

2. It may be admitted that the more obvious rendering would be to make the participle *prior* in time to the infinitive: "It became Him, having brought many sons," etc. And on this view many varied interpretations have been advanced; chiefly, "having *actually* brought many sons to glory," *i.e.* the saints of the O.T. dispensation, or "having *in His eternal counsels* brought," etc. Neither seems natural or adequate; the thought gains both force and simplicity if we may render "in bringing." Will the Greek permit? Certainly the aorist participle may

I know, been often explained as having respect to our Lord's work, rather than to Himself. The perfection is defined as completeness in the issues of that work: the full salvation of those who follow Him as their Saviour. Such exegesis can be dictated only by supposed theological necessities; and the parallel passage, "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered," might have suggested the deeper personal application of the words. He was to regain, as the result and reward of submission to divine discipline, that which He had put from Him. His essential character of goodness, patience, courage, self-sacrifice, was to be elicited in full manifestation; and thus He *grew*, if we may so say, to the perfectness which placed Him upon the throne of Heaven. "*Wherefore*, God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the name which is above every name." He had won that name —had won it back—through trial, obedience, and suffering.

express action contemporaneous with that of the verb with which it is connected, *e.g.* ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν, He answered and said; προσευξάμενοι εἶπον, they prayed saying (see also Rom. iv. 20; Phil. ii. 7). But it also seems true that in these and similar instances the part of the complex action expressed by the participle is in a subordinate and a *modal* relation to that of the main verb: thus, "He said in the way of answer," "they said in the way of prayer," "He emptied Himself by taking the form of a servant." A strict parallel here would rather require transposition of participle and infinitive: ἔπρεπεν αὐτῷ . . . ἀγαγεῖν . . . τελειώσαντα, "it became Him . . . to bring . . . by perfecting." On the whole, while retaining the rendering "in bringing," it seems best to regard the *aorist* participle as exceptional if not unique. A perfectly normal usage would have been the *present* participle ἄγοντα = ἐν τῷ ἄγειν, "in the course or process of bringing"; but the writer apparently wishes to avoid the suggestion that the perfecting of Christ by sufferings is one step only in a process: it is something involved in the very fact of the bringing many sons unto glory. Had the infinitive construction been chosen we should have had, not ἐν τῷ ἄγειν, but ἐν τῷ ἀγαγεῖν; and as the one could by common usage be replaced by the present participle, so is the other exceptionally, but quite intelligibly, replaced by the aorist participle.

In any case the interpretation of τελειῶσαι stands good.

S. W. G.

In reference to our Lord's temptations, while we cannot fully understand them, two considerations may afford some key to the mystery. The first is, that the power of a temptation to affect the soul lies not so much in any sense of weakness, as in the purity and holiness that are assailed. These form an element of sensitiveness, and in proportion to the saintliness will be the horror at the assaults of evil. He, therefore, by whom the temptation would be felt more exquisitely than by any of the sons of men, was the Son of God. The second thought is that the recorded temptations of Jesus lay in the line of His work as the Messiah. They presented to His mind one and another way of attaining His great purpose, different from the chosen path of submission and self-sacrifice. Assert Thine own power to supply Thy needs! "Command that these stones become bread." This failing, through His trustful dependence on the Father, the next seductive appeal was to reveal that confidence to all men: "Cast Thyself down from hence." When this, too, proved fruitless, the question was urged whether the kingdom of the world might not be won, after all, by worldly ways. Do homage to the god of this world, and the "kingdoms and the glory of them" may easily be Thine. It was then that, with a scorn divine, He declared that His only possible path was that of obedience and service; and the tempter vanished.[1] Only, however, to reappear. Virtually, it was the same appeal which the unknowing disciple addressed to Him at Cæsarea Philippi. The Cross, the suffering, "this shall not be unto Thee"! Our Lord recognises what such an appeal implied. "Get thee behind Me, Satan; thou art a stumbling-block unto Me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men." Such were the temptations that beset His career, and would have hindered His purpose, while

[1] On the Temptation, see especially Dr. Fairbairn, *Studies in the Gospels.*

apparently carrying it forward to consummation; and by resistance He won His way to perfection and to victory.

V

Such, then, are some of the aspects of what is called the doctrine of *Kenosis*. The term is undoubtedly a convenient one, but we must not press it too far. It is simply the adoption of an apostolic phrase, to sum up the records and declarations of the New Testament respecting the earthly life of the Son of God; accepted, as these are, by devout thinkers of our day with an almost unprecedented fearlessness and sincerity. The attempt has been repeatedly made to include these facts under some larger generalisation; and the several "Kenotic theories" of our time, with varying success, endeavour to bring the grand reality within the conditions of our thought.[1] But as Dr. James Denney observes, "The idea (of Incarnation as described by Paul in the passage referred to) impresses the imagination and touches the heart rather than aids the intelligence; the attempts that have been made in what are known as the Kenotic Christologies to interpret it metaphysically, hardly take us much further on."[2] The progress of thought is soon arrested; and we who can so dimly understand the union of body, soul, and spirit in ourselves, or analyse the movements of our own free will under the sway and impulse of the Divine, need not wonder if we fail to explain the union of God and man in the unique personality of Jesus.

And yet we may reverently advance by another line of thought to some apprehension of the mystery. Without theorising as to what the Divine renunciation may mean, we may at least take note how very nearly the Eternal may

[1] See an admirable summary of these theories in Dr. A. B. Bruce's *Humiliation of Christ*, Lecture iv.

[2] *Studies in Theology*, 1894, p. 57.

approach to man. He who pervades the universe with His presence, whom we may trace in the atom, the flower, the star, chooses as His temple the spirit of man. This is not Pantheism; nor, confessedly, is it Incarnation; yet the thought may do something to bridge over the vast expanse between God and man. The saint and the prophet, especially, are God-filled, and are most truly themselves when "the Spirit of the Almighty" takes possession of their powers, and brings them into harmony with the Supreme Goodness and Truth.

Man, in his ideal, is akin to the Divine. "In the likeness of God" man was created. "A man," writes the Apostle Paul, "is the image and glory of God."[1] Such declarations cover far more than any outward characteristics; they suggest *affinity*, of which communion with God is for us the highest possible expression, and of which Incarnation is the crown. The method we can never understand; but the fact itself is in the line of all other Divine manifestations to His intelligent and spiritual creation; only infinitely transcending them. God "in very deed, with man upon the earth," prepares us for God in man, and for Him whose name is Immanuel.

Hence the deep significance of the fact that the title which the Lord Jesus when upon earth especially assumed was that of "Son of Man." He alone employs it. To His disciples He was Teacher, Master, Son of God. The title is a direct claim to lordship, associated as it was with Daniel's vision of "one like unto a Son of Man," who "came even to the Ancient of Days."[2] But this reference to prophecy does not exhaust the meaning of the phrase. We are all sons of men:[3] He alone sums up our race, in its highest ideal and with all its possibilities of perfection. To

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 7. [2] Dan. vii. 13.

[3] See Bishop Chadwick, "The Gospel of St. Mark," in the *Expositor's Bible*, p. 54.

speak of Him as "the ideal man" is inadequate: such a title might conceivably be given to one of merely human birth, who might, by a process of divinely-guided development, come forth at length as the consummate flower and crown of humanity. Yet such a man, however sanctified from the womb, would still be born with the hereditary defect of our race, and would need that the stain of original sin should be purged away. The Holy One of God, virgin born, appeared under entirely different conditions. As has often been pointed out, He came, not as *a* man with whom the Divine Logos was pleased to associate Itself, but as God-man from the first, the Son of Humanity, "the Second Man, the Lord from heaven."

And in the mystery which must attend the truth of His renunciation after all our thoughts and reasonings concerning it, the highest aspect of the Incarnation—that in which it comes most nearly home to ourselves — must never be forgotten. As a revelation of perfect purity, and of perfect love, it requires no metaphysical subtleties, or fine-drawn distinctions, or exegetical acumen, to bring it within the range of our reverent and adoring thought. It may be that the theologians of our time have dwelt somewhat disproportionately on the possibilities of limitation in the Divine Humanity, to the comparative neglect of the certainties of life and love and grace and truth which, in full-orbed glory, that Humanity reveals. From pondering the *Kenosis* of which Paul speaks, it is good to turn to the proëm of John's Gospel, and to read the open secret of the Incarnation there. To reveal the Infinite Holiness, translated into human life, to manifest the Eternal Love and the Eternal Righteousness, as in reality and essence One, and thus to become the Light and Life of men, was the great intent of His mission. In a world of sin this Love declared itself mainly in self-sacrifice, "Hereby know we Love, because He laid down His life for us."[1]

[1] 1 John iii. 16.

It was an ancient question, much debated, whether the manifestation of God in flesh was the consequence of human sin. The question characteristically exercised the schoolmen;[1] in our own day Dorner and Martensen, among others, have revived it. They argue that this most glorious fact in the universe may, for the honour of God, be best conceived as apart from the introduction of sin into the world. And it is added, with great force, that since the God-man abides for ever, to remain the centre of faith and worship after sin has been destroyed, it is reasonable to suppose that there must be some eternal purpose, unconditioned by the Fall, in such a manifestation.[2] "The thought," writes Bishop Westcott, "that the Incarnation, the union of man with God, and of creation in man, was part of the Divine purpose in creation, opens unto us, as I believe, wider views of the wisdom of God than we commonly embrace, which must react upon life. It presents to us the highest manifestation of Divine love as answering to the idea of man, and not as dependent on that which lay outside the Father's will. It reveals to us how the Divine purpose is fulfilled in unexpected and unimaginable ways in spite of man's selfishness and sin."[3] There is something sublime in the speculation, impossible as it may be, on either philosophical or exegetical grounds, to affirm its truth: the fact that it has laid hold of so many minds may show how congenial is the thought of God revealed in manhood, and so revealed eternally.

But as it is, the revelation is conditioned by sin; it culminates in sacrifice, and the "Lamb *slain*" is "in the midst of the throne." We are thus led to the crowning

[1] See Bishop Westcott's *Epistles of St. John*, note on the "Gospel of Creation," pp. 277–299, for a summary of their arguments.

[2] See Dorner, *History of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, div. ii. vol. ii. p. 80, Clark's trans. The question is discussed by Principal Edwards, *The God-man*, p. 84 sq.

[3] *Epistles of St. John*, p. 315.

purpose of the manifestation as it respects ourselves. It was made, not simply that we might gaze upon its surpassing glory, and by the power of its attractiveness be ourselves moulded into the image of the Divine, but that sin might be put away, in what we are entitled to say was the only possible method. This great aspect of the subject will be treated elsewhere in the present volume. Only, the twofold truth stands clearly forth; that none but man could atone for man, and that none but God could "make an end of sin." It is the more necessary to insist upon this aspect of the doctrine, from the fact noted at the beginning of this Essay, that the centre of Christian belief has somewhat changed. If it was only too possible, when the problems of Soteriology occupied chief attention, to become egoistic and even selfish in our religious thought; it is possible, on the other hand, to forget, in the larger Christology of the day, that what we need is more than a revelation, however attractive and sublime. It is true that as we look upon "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" we are "changed into the same image, from glory into glory." So far the Ritschlian theology, which has fascinated so many thoughtful minds, is undoubtedly right. But sinful as we are, we are not in a position to behold that glory until a transforming change has been wrought upon ourselves. Most impressively is this truth brought out in the two most magnificent delineations which the Epistles contain of our Lord's divine majesty. He, "being the effulgence of the glory of God and the very image of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power, *when He had made purification of sins*, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high"; and so the sublime representations of His Sonship and divine greatness that follow, all culminate in the thought that "it behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to *make propitiation* for

the sins of the people." The vital element in the great revelation is Atonement for sin. So in the Epistle to the Colossians. There, in the unveiling of the Mystery of God, Redemption, the Forgiveness of sins, stands first: then comes the wonderful description of Him who is the image of the invisible God, the "First-born of all creation"; and after the resources of language have been exhausted in the expression of His Divine greatness, the apostle returns to this as the climax of all, that by the Blood of the Cross is the universal reconciliation. Atonement is first and last; and it is the law of Sacrifice which conveys to us the deepest significance, both theological and ethical, of the Divine Humanity of the Word, the Son of Man, the Son of God.

V

THE REDEMPTIVE WORK OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

By R. VAUGHAN PRYCE

V

The Redemptive Work of the Lord Jesus Christ

There can be little doubt that, in the minds of many, acceptance of the Christian Doctrine of Redemption by Jesus Christ has been greatly hindered by the way in which the doctrine has been set forth by theologians; by the views to which they have given expression. It has been affirmed that sin is a debt due to God, and that God rigidly exacts payment of that debt, and that Christ has paid our debt to the uttermost farthing. It has been held that Christ, by His sacrifice on the Cross, appeased the wrath of an angry, if not vindictive God; and disposed Him to look with favour on a sinful race, which, but for that sacrifice, He was prepared to destroy. It has been taught that God insists on punishing the guilty, but is nevertheless willing to punish the innocent in place of the guilty; and that Christ has been substituted for us, and become the bearer of the punishment which was our due, in our stead. A highly artificial doctrine of imputed righteousness has been maintained; and we have been told, that though we are not actually righteous, yet, through faith in Christ, God regards us as if we were, because of the imputation to us of the righteousness of Christ. By these and kindred conceptions, prejudices have been created against a doctrine which is certainly contained in Scripture, and which has been a source of consolation and comfort to multitudes of stricken souls.

On the other hand, it has been affirmed, commonly in a

reactionary spirit and temper, that the only redemption man needs, is redemption from ignorance, which is effected by knowledge, and not redemption from sin by any costly process of mediation. It has been affirmed that the gospel of Jesus Christ is not a gospel of remission of sins through the blood of Jesus; that His gospel is contained in the Sermon on the Mount, and in His general teaching concerning the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. It is affirmed that the Parable of the Prodigal Son teaches all we need to know, or can know, concerning the relations of God to man, and of man to God; that this beautiful illustration of the willingness of the Divine Father to receive the returning prodigal negatives any doctrine of mediation, or of reconciliation effected by the death of Jesus Christ, and that all such views must be abandoned in favour of what is called a simpler and more rational faith.

The present essay is designed to call attention to certain teachings of Scripture which seem to be overlooked in the affirmations of the second paragraph in the above, and to be strangely perverted in the affirmations that precede these. The attempt will be made, in the light of the views that have been described, to collect from the New Testament, and especially from the sayings of Christ, the doctrine of His vicarious sacrifice. No attempt will be made to fathom the unfathomable mystery of godliness. There will be no direct discussion of the nature of the atonement, though light may fall even on this mystery in the effects which it produces. Where Scripture is silent, speculation will, as far as possible, be avoided. It will be taken for granted that, without the aid of the Divine Spirit, man can never know how real and appalling sin is, and can therefore never know what kind of redemption can alone meet his need. It is perhaps hardly to be doubted that when men come to the Scriptures for their thoughts about sin, they will be ready to welcome the teaching of Scripture

concerning redemption from sin. Be this as it may, on the subject in hand our only appeal is to Scripture, as it is the only source of knowledge.

I

The New Testament writers declare, and they represent their Master as declaring, that a mysterious efficacy attached to His death; a significance which is not explained by many interpretations of that event, as when it is said that He died a martyr to truth, and the like. These writers affirm that in some mysterious way the death of Christ availed for the redemption of man. This is a declaration of Scripture and not a revelation of reason, and must be so regarded.

The leading passages in which this efficacy is taught will be considered below. It is enough to remark now, that the testimony of the New Testament on this point is so clear and full that no statement of the doctrine of the redeeming work of the Lord Jesus Christ can be accounted scriptural which fails to discern and appraise this truth. If it be said that Jesus Himself did not speak much about it, this must be granted; but the reasons for this become obvious on a little consideration. First of all, the thought of what was awaiting Him gave Him anguish, and made it natural that He should shrink from speaking of it. Nothing, moreover, can be clearer than that His audience, even when consisting of His most intimate disciples, was wholly unprepared for any announcement on the point, and that they were incapable of understanding Him. If, then, He does speak at any time of the event which threw a shadow across His life, and on which the efficacy of His work depended, we may be quite sure that His words will be charged with the deepest significance.

With these considerations in mind, let us recall the words of the evangelist Luke (xii. 50), wherein he tells us

of the baptism of suffering to which Christ was looking forward. We shall probably see reason presently for supposing that the meaning of the temptation of Christ was that the inducement was held out before Him of ascending His throne without suffering; but whether this be so or not, the language of Jesus, as recorded by the evangelist, implies that there was a profound purpose in His passion and death. Then there are allusions, scattered throughout the Gospels, to the efficacy of His death, showing His own view on the subject. Indeed it seemed to be in the very consciousness of Christ, not only that He was born to be a King, but that it was only by passing through suffering and death that He could ascend His throne, or be glorified.

In His conversation with Nicodemus, at the outset of His ministry, speaking of the purpose of His coming, He declared that He must needs be lifted up in order that the disease from which humanity suffered might be cured. That this lifting up refers to the Cross is made tolerably evident by a subsequent allusion in the same Gospel, where the writer says that the lifting up of Christ meant His death (John xii. 32). Here power to heal humanity is virtually made dependent on His death. Again, He says, according to the same evangelist (chap. vi.), that His flesh is to be given for the life of the world, where He could not be referring to His incarnation, for the event was yet in the future. He could only be referring to His death. Elsewhere, He says (Matt. xx. 28) that He came to give His life a ransom for many. What ransom means we shall investigate later; the point now is that the reference is to His death, and to the mysterious efficacy that belonged to it. The words were spoken a week before the Passion. He had been announcing to the apostles His approaching death, with the fearful details,—the judgment, the delivery to the Romans, the mocking, scourging, and crucifying,—to

be followed by the resurrection. Then immediately afterwards He sums up the doctrine of His death, as in a word, saying, "The Son of man came to give His life a ransom for many." Nothing could more clearly point to the virtue of His death than these words from His own lips. With these words the apostles are in abundant agreement, as when Peter declared (1 Pet. i. 18, 19), not to multiply illustrations, that we were redeemed, "not with corruptible things, with silver or gold . . . but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ." Only one other example. At the Passover, just before His Passion (Matt. xxvi. 26), when He was instituting the great memorial feast alone with His disciples, He shows to them the profound efficacy of His death, telling them that His blood was about to be shed for the remission of sins. Let this suffice on the efficacy assigned to the passion and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. The evidence is drawn from the Gospels; but it would be easy to quote similar testimony from the Epistles, showing how apostles understood their Lord.

II

If it be asked, What is the efficacy attributed to the death of Christ? the answer is complex, but for the most part clear. A threefold efficacy is assigned by the New Testament to the death of Christ. It is suggested, if not stated, that there was a threefold necessity for His death. It was necessary in order to the remission of sins. It was necessary, also, in order to the imparting of the new life. It was also necessary in order that the tempter might be vanquished. It may seem presumptuous to speak of a necessity that He should die who called Himself the Saviour of the world, yet Scripture appears amply to justify, if not to encourage, this mode of speech.

1. Men have sometimes spoken and written as though the atoning death of Christ was necessary in order to win the love of God for us. The Scriptures never speak in that way. Christ is never spoken of as though He were the procuring cause of the divine love, but always as its gift. He is not the spring of the divine love, but its expression. Evangelists and apostles agree that the gift of Christ to the sinful race was a manifestation of the amazing love of God; that it was of God's tender love, and unspeakable compassion, that Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. It is emphatically His death for us that supremely expresses this love. He taught edifying doctrine, and that was good. He gave utterance to lofty precepts, which was also good. He gave men an encouraging example, and consolatory promises which have cheered the hearts of saints and martyrs. But none of these are presented as the great and supreme expression of the divine love for us, while His death is so presented. It is here that the profound purpose of God is to be seen—in His death.

2. The remission of sins is attributed to the death of Christ. The idea is a sacrificial one, and is essentially involved in the Old Testament sacrifices. Accordingly, when the Messiah is spoken of as about to appear, salvation from sin is intimately connected with the work He is to accomplish. At the time of the Advent the Jewish people were expecting their Messiah. The Gospels make this evident. And it is equally evident that their notions of what He would be and do were shaped, in great measure, by the representations in the Book of Isaiah, the fifty-third and fortieth chapters of that book being interpreted by the Rabbis as Messianic in character.

Accordingly, we are not surprised to find the Baptist pointing Christ out to his disciples as the Lamb of God who would bear away the sin of the world. The expression

has its explanation in the prophetic forecast. Then, again, we have Zacharias the priest, the father of John the Baptist, describing, in prophetic song, the mission of his own son, and saying of him, that he would be the prophet of the Most High, going before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation unto His people in the remission of their sins. The evangelist Matthew, moreover, sees in Christ's miracles of healing a proof that He was the sin-bearer whom Isaiah had prefigured.

In perfect harmony with this we find Christ Himself declaring—and three evangelists tells us this—that His blood would effect a new covenant for the remission of sins, whereby He would lift men into a new relation to God, one of favour and forgiveness. The reference is to what took place in the upper room on the night of His Passion. He took bread and called it His body, broken for them, and bade them eat of it. In Jewish sacrifices the offerer often partook: it would therefore hardly surprise the disciples that they should be invited to eat of the bread. When, however, he poured the wine, and said that it represented His blood poured out in sacrifice for them, He performed an act which had no analogy in Israel; and He points to a mysterious efficacy attaching to the shedding of His blood which had no counterpart in the sacrifices of old, for it was specially ordained in the Levitical Law that the blood of the sacrifices might not be drunk on pain of death, but was to be poured away at the base of the altar.

The peculiarity is striking. The Levitical Law said: Eat the blood and you shall die. The reason is added: The blood is the life, and it is it which maketh atonement by reason of the life that is in it. The command of Christ is: Drink ye all of it; and the reason is given: For this is My blood of the new covenant which is shed for many for the

remission of sins. The blood of the sacrifices under the old economy might not be eaten, and the prohibition was grounded in the very reason which is urged in the new covenant for taking it, namely, that the blood is the life that makes atonement, the fact being that the blood of the animal had no value except as a symbol; whereas the blood of Christ was the reality which it symbolised. The former had no real efficacy, being but the blood of bulls and of goats, which could never take away sins. The latter, the blood of Christ, of which the wine was the symbol, was really efficacious. Augustine is a sound interpreter when he says that the blood might not be eaten in the one case, because it simply prefigured the most precious blood which makes atonement by means of the soul that is in it. In the blood of the beasts there was no soul that could be spiritual food, and therefore it may not be eaten.

3. There is another reason given for the death of Christ, and this will bring us, perhaps, more nearly face to face with the mysteries of the spiritual world. It is frequently suggested that there was some mysterious necessity for the death of Christ as the alone condition of the life of Christ—the vital principle of His own life—passing into us. Indeed, the symbolical act, to which attention has just been called, seems to suggest this, while the words of Christ elsewhere hardly leave us in doubt on the point.

Conversing with Nicodemus, and speaking of the purpose of His coming, He says, that it was for the regeneration of men, that they might be born anew. The Lord hints to Nicodemus how His death would effect this. When He had been lifted up, *i.e.* crucified, healing virtue would go forth from Him; a new life, new in vigour, new in principle, even the divine life, would be infused into the

believer. This is elsewhere said to be His own life. Before it could enter into man, however, it must needs be first poured out or forth. This is not directly affirmed in this passage, but it is implied.

On a subsequent occasion, discoursing to the multitude that followed Him over the Sea of Gennesaret, He further illustrates this thought—a thought which frequently appears in John's narratives of His discourses. His death, it is affirmed, was necessary, in order that His divine life, infused into man, might regenerate him; and it is affirmed that this was the gift of the Heavenly Father to mankind in the death of His Son. Christ declares that the bread that perishes is a symbol of Himself; that His divine nature is the bread, the true bread, the nourishing principle of our eternal life; and that it was to be communicated to man by the eating of His flesh and the drinking of His blood.

The exaltation of Himself as the object of faith is noteworthy. So is His statement that He was about to give His flesh for the life of the world; clearly indicating a close connection between His impending death and the life of the world; as also that that death was necessary in order to this giving of life.

The murmuring of the Jews at this expression has often been repeated since. His added words, on that occasion, are intended to show that what He would do would be done after His death. When the Lord speaks, with the emphasis involved in the expression "except," of the eating of His flesh and the drinking of His blood as essential to the life of man, He uses mysterious words. But if we understand Him to be referring to His death on behalf of sinners, and to the effect of faith in Him who thus died, light falls on the words which otherwise are inexplicable. An old divine says that the best way to understand this verse is to make trial of, and feed on, Him

by faith, and that we shall then soon discover how true the words are. Christian experience vouches that this is so. One of a very different school of thought says that the eating of the flesh of Christ, and the drinking of His blood, is faith in the death of Christ; so that the sense is, if ye use not the death of the Son of God as meat and drink, ye have not the life of the Spirit in you. The writer's meaning is that in the fullest and noblest sense the soul's needs are met in Him.

4. There is a third purpose of His death—showing at once its efficiency and the virtue or necessity of it—to which mysterious, but obvious, reference is made. The Lord's pregnant discourses, on the eve of His Passion, contain plain hints of a mysterious conflict with the power or powers of darkness; a conflict which began on the mountain of temptation, which was renewed in the shades of Gethsemane, and which reached its height on the Cross, when the words, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" reveal a heart on the point of breaking.

After the institution of the Supper, the Master and His disciples left the upper chamber, and passed in the moonlight into Gethsemane. On the way He speaks to them of the coming of the prince of the world; a coming, of course, for conflict, because of the necessary antagonism between the spirit of truth, incarnate in Jesus Christ, and the spirit of evil. It was the renewal of an old conflict. Most significant are the words of the evangelist at the conclusion of the narrative of the first temptation, "Then the devil departed from Him for a season." We now become aware of the renewal of that conflict, of the return of the tempter for the final trial of strength. Jesus is aware that the assault is impending, but the agony of the conflict is not as yet upon Him, and the high priestly prayer testifies

to the as yet unbroken calmness of His spirit. The Shepherd and the little flock are alone together, and His tranquil spirit communes with His Father in holy words of prayer.

He had, however, already warned them that the wolf was coming; and now the conflict is at hand, and there is no escape from it. Gethsemane has ever since been a sacred name, because it witnessed the mysterious agony or conflict—for that is the meaning of the word—which was soon to issue in triumph on the Cross, where He would vanquish him that had the power of death by Himself dying. Gethsemane was the scene, and is the symbol, of the intense spiritual conflict called forth by the approach from without of a being who nevertheless had nothing in Him. It was the hour and power of darkness. Christ's heel would be bruised by him whose head He Himself would bruise. Save for the final assault on the Cross, to which in a moment of extreme weakness He had to submit, this perhaps was the climax of the struggle between the Son of God and the prince of the world. So did the Good Shepherd give His life for the sheep. He chose to die, that by death He might vanquish him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. By death He brought to nought him that had the power of death, and effected the deliverance of his subjects (Heb. ii. 14, 15).

There are frequent references to this great spiritual conflict elsewhere in the New Testament. Thus we find the evangelist John saying that one purpose of the manifestation of Christ was, that He might destroy the works of the devil. The Apostle Paul is clearly in accord with this. While the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews boldly declares that the assumption of humanity by Jesus Christ, and His subjection to temptation, even to the uttermost,

was necessary in the interests of humanity; that only by Christ's resistance of temptation to the uttermost, even unto death, could the ascendancy which the tempter had secured over the race be effectually destroyed. If it be asked how Christ's death effected this destruction of the lord of death, the answer is given by this writer when he goes on to explain a second purpose of the death of Christ, namely, that He was the expiation of the sins of the world; and this, in reality, is the central idea in the whole subject.

As has been said, Paul also presents this aspect of the work of Christ to us, as in his letter to the Colossians, where he describes the work of Christ as a vicarious triumph over our spiritual foes. His reason for viewing the subject in that light, in writing to this Church, is given in the circumstances of the Church. The faith of the Colossian believers was disturbed by two forces. The one was represented by Judaism, the religion of formal observances; the other, by a Gnosticism akin to the theosophy of the Essenes. The teachers of the latter doctrine laid stress on the principalities and powers of the unseen universe; and it is in reference to this belief that Paul sets forth the work of Christ as a work of triumph over the spiritual adversaries of the Christian. There are powers of darkness from which we needed to be delivered, as well as evil inclinations within; and in Christ we have our deliverance from these. Christ took on Himself our human nature, with all its temptations, says Paul, as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews also says. The powers of evil gathered about Him. They assailed Him again and again in His history, ever, however, suffering defeat. They assailed Him in the suggestion of Peter, "This shall not be, Lord." They assailed Him often. At length the crisis came, and the final defeat. The powers of evil, which had clung like a Nessus robe to His humanity,—so Lightfoot,—were torn off and

thrown aside for ever. And in the victory of Christ our victory is involved. In His Cross we, too, are divested of the poisonous clinging garments of temptation, sin, death. Thus does Paul set forth the effect of the death of Christ on the powers of evil. He entered into personal conflict with the tempter, triumphed over the tempter, and apparently lessened his power for ever over us. What that struggle cost Him we cannot tell. The advantage that comes to man through His vicarious suffering happily we may share, but the "price" of our redemption was His Passion. We can hardly be wrong, then, in saying, that His mysterious agony opens to our view something of the transcendent meaning of His death. It was necessary that, in this way, he should be vanquished whose was the power of death, whose it was alone to make death other than God intended it to be.

Let this suffice on the threefold necessity of the death of Christ as the Scriptures seem to declare it. He died in order that forgiveness of sins might be possible. He died in order that the flow of the life of God into the human soul might be possible. He died in order that evil might be vanquished—might be deprived of its triumphant power, and ultimately of its dominion. The reader will not fail to observe the absence of certain ideas which have found a place in some modern systems of theology. There is nothing here about appeasing the anger of God. There is nothing here about the satisfying of an exacting creditor who will be paid to the uttermost farthing. So far the effectiveness of the death of Christ may be set forth in three terms: forgiveness, life, moral victory.

III

This is not all that is told us on this momentous theme. Attention must now be turned to certain terms and ex-

pressions which not only throw light on the necessity and the efficacy of the death of Christ, but which also reveal to us something concerning the method of the great salvation accomplished by that death. The reference is to such terms as Propitiation, Expiation, Reconciliation, Covenant, and the like.

1. And, in the first place, let us consider the term Propitiation.

It is not possible to solve the mystery of the death of Christ. All that is possible is to understand what Scripture says. Light enough is given for guidance, not enough to satisfy the speculative intellect. As elsewhere, so here, the revelations given in Scripture are abundant, many rays of light converging on the Cross. We have allusions to the death of Christ in a great variety of forms: in sacrifice and type, in prophecy, in apostolic doctrine; and by these light is thrown on the mysterious significance of that death.

Meanwhile, let us not seek to be learned beyond what Scripture teaches, or to be definite where Scripture is obscure, or to put an undue strain on figurative language. Some have taught that the sufferings of Christ were penal. They have declared that Christ was punished instead of the sinner,—that this was necessary in order to reconcile the attributes. Justice required that sin should be punished; mercy required that compassion should be shown towards the sinner. Christ bore the punishment which justice demanded, and mercy let the sinner go free, the claims of justice having been satisfied by the Innocent One standing in the place of the guilty. Precisely what the punishment was that Christ bore presented a difficult problem, and various attempts were made to solve it by those who, nevertheless, agreed that what Christ bore was a substitutionary penalty. Some went so far as to say that He endured the very pains of hell, the exact equivalent

of what sinful humanity deserved to suffer. Others, like Grotius, shrinking from this conception of the work of Christ, nevertheless maintained that He endured penalty instead of man, as far as would suffice to prove the justice of God, and to deter from light thoughts of sin. It was on views of this kind that the theory of imputation was grafted, the theory which taught that the sin of man was imputed to Christ, and that the righteousness of Christ was imputed to man.

There is in such views so much that is artificial, not to speak of the element of injustice which seems to be involved, that many of the best minds have been repelled. They have turned away from all exposition of the doctrine of the atonement, or they have sought an explanation of it elsewhere, in some view that would be less offensive to the moral feeling. The notion of a transaction between the justice of God and His mercy is not attractive, and almost inevitably becomes in thought a transaction between the Father and the Son, leading naturally to the Arian position. Then it is not easy to see what penalty Christ bore, thereby saving us from bearing it. It cannot be death, inasmuch as all alike suffer it, the saved and the unsaved alike; while none affirm that Christ bore the penalty of eternal death.

These views were not known to the early Fathers of the Church, and they have never become Catholic doctrine. There are, however, some terms in which it is supposed that this doctrine may be found, and propitiation is one of these. Hence we must inquire into the meaning of this term. What, then, is the idea to be attached to it? Now, at the outset it must be observed that this term Propitiation is one of the terms found in pagan religions as well as in Scripture. It does not, however, follow that the meaning attached to the word by pagans is the meaning attached to it by the Scriptures; and to overlook this

is to introduce confusion and error. The heathen man, no doubt, when he brought an offering to his god, hoped thereby to win his favour. He would appease the wrath of the angry god. He would induce him to relax the claims of his law in return for the compensation the worshipper offered, and so to pass by the sinner's sin. There is no such idea in Scripture, though it has appeared in theology. Let us now try and understand what the scriptural idea of propitiation is.

And, first, as to the problem. The Scriptures teach us, that between God and what is sinful the incompatibility is complete. Sin, therefore, must be put away from the sinner before he can be acceptable to the holy God. If, then, there can be no communion between the holy God and what is sinful, how shall man enter into communion with God? If he could clear himself of sin, he could commune with God. If he cannot do this, then, apart from a helper, he must remain separate from God. The fall of man means living in estrangement from God; and, in the language of Scripture, so to live is to be dead,—dead to God, which is the only death man need dread. How then shall that change be effected in him which his condition and the holiness of God alike require? There is a way revealed of God, and to know this is to know what we may of the great propitiatory work. What then is this work?

The Lord Jesus Christ, at the final Passover feast, when instituting the ordinance which the Christian Church, in all its branches, has reverently observed for so many centuries, spoke to His disciples of "a new covenant in His blood." The account is given us by three of the evangelists, and may therefore be regarded as sufficiently attested. Light is here thrown on the method of the Redeemer's work—on the process chosen of God by which to effect our redemption. In the service of God everything depends

on the affections and the will, and this is fully regarded in the method we are now to consider.

A new covenant in Christ seems to mean that Christ becomes surety for mankind in a covenant of grace. The nature of this covenant must, if possible, be ascertained. The statement may perhaps be hazarded, that if humanity could of itself cease absolutely from sin, or, to use the scriptural expression, could "die unto sin," so that sin no longer had any place in it, or power over it, it would in that case do for itself what Christ did for it. He, of His own free will, in this sense took our place, and did vicariously what we could not do, "died unto sin" once for all on behalf of humanity, and thereby, of His own free will, presented to God a vicarious oblation, the second Adam doing on behalf of humanity what humanity ought to do of itself, but could not, and Himself entering into covenant that, through His grace and help, humanity should do what, apart from that grace and help, it could not do, should die unto sin and live unto righteousness, and so meet the requirements of the holy will of God, and return to fellowship with Him. Christ became, as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews has it (vii. 22), the Mediator of the new covenant, our sponsor, pledge, and surety on our behalf in a covenant. Had mankind been able to fulfil that condition which He fulfilled vicariously, had it been able to present itself to God a sinless offering, no redemption would have been required. Man was made for the sinless service of God. That had become impossible to him. Christ undertook for us, died unto sin for us, that is, in our nature lived the perfect life well-pleasing unto God, and so to say answered for us. *Responde pro me* is the Vulgate rendering of Hezekiah's prayer, "O Lord, undertake for me"; "be surety for me" is the rendering of the Hebrew phrase as given by Gesenius.

We have here an illustration of the meaning of the

work of Christ viewed from the present standpoint. As the Representative of the race, as the Prince of salvation, as the second Head of humanity, He fulfils the condition we could not fulfil, and at once pledges us, and enables all who believe in Him—all who by faith enter into union with Him—to do what God's will requires. Gathering aid from the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and anticipating what we shall presently learn from the Epistle to the Romans, this is the interpretation we seem bound to put on the Redeemer's own words. In the light thus shed some other teachings become plain. We now see what the Lord meant in His high-priestly prayer when He spoke of consecrating, sanctifying or consecrating, Himself, that the disciples might be sanctified or consecrated. This is what the Apostle Paul refers to, or at least it lies beneath his teaching, when he speaks of one dying for all, and affirms therefore that all virtually died in that act. This is what the Catholic Church means, and has always meant, by its doctrine of satisfaction. The idea with which we have to become familiar is that of the ratification of a covenant, wherein Christ becomes the surety or sponsor of humanity. To use the words of Athanasius, God's law was fulfilled by the sacrifice of Christ, inasmuch as all died in Him, and in Him took a new beginning of life; thus man was saved, while the supreme consistency of God's holiness was safeguarded. Here, then, is another reason why the death of Christ was necessary. His death ratified this new covenant, the covenant of forgiveness.

We may turn, for fuller information, to the apostle's account of the meaning and effect of Christ's death as given in the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. He is there really replying to a question, or objection. Somebody supposes, or is conceived as doing so, that the apostle's doctrine excuses sin, for the more we sin, says the objector, the more we magnify the grace of God in

forgiving sin. His argument in this chapter is directed against that position, his purpose being to show that the acceptance of God's grace, and continuance in sin, are incompatible. And the reason he assigns is, that the acceptance of the gospel, and dying unto sin, are one and the same thing. And it is in this connection that we have one of the best scriptural expositions of the great doctrine of Christ's propitiatory or vicarious work. "How shall we who died unto sin live any longer therein?" The believer is pledged to die unto sin by the dying unto sin, on his behalf, and as his surety, of Jesus Christ. The intelligent acceptance of Christ means that, like Him, we become dead to the suggestions and the commandments of sin: are as unmoved by these things, says Chrysostom, as a corpse would be. Such a doctrine, says the apostle, cannot lead to Antinomianism. He, the Head, the Representative and Summation of the race, did for us what we could not do for ourselves; did it vicariously: and by accepting Him we place ourselves beneath the absolute obligation at once to die unto sin and to live unto God.

There lies beneath this argument, and exposition of the apostle, the momentous fact that by accepting Christ we become united with Him, spiritually one with Him in mystic union. We are incorporated with Christ. For the doctrine of the incarnation is not that Christ became *a* man, but it is that Christ became *the* man, the second Adam, humanity recapitulated in one, the second Head of the race, the Representative of humanity as a whole, and not of this man or that in particular. By faith we become incorporated with Christ. The apostle's term is one which cannot be exactly rendered, but it is the strongest he could employ. The "planted together" of the Authorised Version has become, in the Revised Version, "become united with Him, by the likeness of His death, united with the likeness." The meaning cannot be expressed in a

word. It is best expressed in our Lord's discourse concerning the Vine and the Branches, where the natural union between these is made to set forth the spiritual union between believers, between renewed humanity, and Himself.

Paul's theology cannot be understood unless this spiritual union between the redeemed and the Redeemer is recognised. In order to apprehend the meaning of Christ's dying unto sin, we must apprehend the meaning of Christ's incorporation of humanity, of all mankind, into Himself. That was His offering to God. The sinless Head of the race died unto sin for the race, in covenant, promising that through Him men should die unto sin, and pledging them to do so. The early Fathers make frequent allusion to this idea of incorporation. They knew nothing of the later doctrine of imputation, and of the imputed righteousness of Christ,—a fiction invented by men who had departed from the simplicity of early times.

The matter may be stated otherwise and still be Pauline. There are two natures in us, the one needing to be slain, the other needing to be quickened. The death of Christ effected the former: it is an accomplished fact, in the apostle's view, inasmuch as our Representative died. The resurrection of Christ effected the latter. How? By virtue of our mystical union with Him; since His incarnation we are "homogeneous with Christ."

This subject is further developed by the apostle in some other of his Epistles. And further development is needed, because it is easy to see that the self that died in Christ was sinless, and was not therefore the sinful self that needed to die, and the question arises, How is this to be explained? How is it to be reconciled with the doctrine of the mystical union? The apostle has not lost sight of this question. In the fifth chapter of his Second Epistle to the Corinthians there is a passage which more or less closely relates itself to this.

He has been speaking of his work as an apostle. He describes it in a sentence. It was his supreme purpose in life to publish abroad the good news of what Christ had accomplished for man, and to explain how it might be appropriated by man. His life was given up to this service of man, and the motive of his service was the love of Christ. Christ died for us: Paul would live to tell it.

But how are we to conceive of Christ's death? of His work in dying for man? Paul here expresses himself on this point. "Christ died on behalf of all, and therefore all died." What does he mean? We cannot imagine him to mean that Christ died in order that men might not die. He rather means that Christ died to secure their death in the only sense in which death is of significance, namely, that they should die to self and sin and thus live to God. He cannot mean that Christ died instead of their dying, because the same expression is used in reference to Christ's resurrection, and none imagine that Christ rose instead of our rising. There must therefore be some other meaning than this.

May we not understand the apostle to say, that in that one death for all, potentially all died; and that a mysterious virtue belonged to the death of Christ, and a mysterious meaning? That His death was virtually the death of humanity summed up in Him? That as far as sufficiency is concerned, the death of Christ meant the death of all; and that as far as efficiency is concerned, all who are united to Him by faith actually die unto sin and live unto God? And if this is his meaning, then we can easily understand the apostle to agree with his Lord in affirming that Christ died as a sponsor or surety in a covenant, and rose again in the same capacity; and thus guarantees the dying unto sin of man, and his living unto God. Here, then, would seem to be the meaning that we are to attach to the teaching of

Scripture concerning the propitiatory death of Christ. Christ's death on behalf of men pledges men to die unto sin as He did. Moreover, He enables men—also a part of His pledge in the covenant—to do so. He died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God.

The apostle then goes on to say how absolutely different is the Christian view of things from the carnal view. We no longer judge after the flesh but after the Spirit; and that is so in regard to the Head as well as in regard to the race which He has redeemed. And then the apostle emphasises a point which should never be lost sight of, that the whole work must be traced to the purpose of God, to the resolve of God to be reconciled to His children at all costs. It was He who was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, striking out of His account their transgressions, and laying it on the apostles to proclaim this. And then he proceeds to show, in the twenty-first verse, how the sinless Christ identified Himself with sinful humanity, the fact being that "Him who knew no sin, God made to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." What does the apostle mean?

In proceeding to examine into the meaning of these words, we may set aside Augustine's interpretation as untenable. He makes sin here to mean sin-offering, taking a view which puts him at variance with all the Greek Fathers. What, then, is the meaning of the phrase "made to be sin for us"? Let us approach the question by asking what sin really means. What do we mean when we speak of humanity as sinful? If we take the case of an infant, it is quite clear that he can know no sin, if by sin is meant actual transgression, for he has not been guilty of it. But then the infant shares the lot of the race which is by heredity infected in nature, which is in a wrong relation to God, as an infected nature inevitably must be. Separate these two ideas or facts, actual sin, and the

wrong relation to God which an infected nature implies, and it will be seen how possible it was for Christ to share the one without sharing the other. Without actual transgression there may be such an identification with man, in his present lot and condition, that Christ may be said to share his wrong relation to God—in His case voluntarily adopted for a purpose; in our case inherited. And if so, then there is a sense in which the sinless Head became like us, shared our sinful condition, in order that He might restore us to our right relation to God. The sinless Head of the race is, by His incarnation, identified with the sinful, in order thereby to work out their redemption.

There are two views of this passage with which the above is in obvious contrast. There is the view of those who would explain away the passage by making it refer simply to the indignities endured by Christ at the hands of men. The affirmation is that the Lord received from the hands of men a treatment which wore the appearance of, and might be construed as if it were, the treatment given to a sinner. The statement of the apostle, however, is not that men reputed Him to be a sinner, but that God made Him to be sin. There is more here than semblance or appearance; nor is the reference to what He received at the hands of men, but to what He was by the will of God. The words do not merely mean that men entertained ill thoughts of Christ, and treated Him as though He were a sinner, for they say that He was made sin for us. The other view is that Christ, the sinless One, the realised ideal of humanity, wrapt Himself in His people's sins, and was constituted sin, by His Father's act and His own, in such a manner that at the bar of God He was no longer innocent. Before men, indeed, He was not guilty, but before God He was. It is further maintained that this guiltiness before God was not by any infusion, but by objective imputation, which carried with it punitive consequences precisely as

though the sin were His own. The obvious objection to this view is that it is artificial, and without foundation, other than in the fancy of men. The exigencies of a system or creed may require it, but Scripture does not give it.

There is a remarkable passage in the Epistle to the Galatians (iii. 13), which says that the curse of the law rested on man on account of sin. That we can well understand, inasmuch as man has failed to fulfil the requirements of the divine law, which itself says, "cursed is everyone that continueth not therein." From that curse we are delivered by Christ, and especially by His death; but how? Not by His becoming accurst of God in our place and stead, as some have dared to say, but by His dying as our Representative, Sponsor, Surety, in the covenant of grace; by His so identifying Himself with us that He might "die unto sin once for all" for us. Here is the vicariousness of His death. The affirmation has been made, that he that hangeth on a tree is accursed *of God*. Paul did not say that, and in regard to Christ it is not true. This is an imported idea: it seems better to interpret the passage in harmony with the general teaching of the New Testament on our subject.

2. The New Testament has a doctrine of Reconciliation. The reconciliation is no doubt of man to God. But is this a complete expression of the truth? We read in Scripture of the wrath of God, and the conviction is deep in human nature that there is that in God which prevents the outflow of the divine graciousness towards sinners. The holy God cannot look on sin but with abhorrence, cannot regard sinful humanity as though it were pure; and it is probably of this that we have to think when we speak of the wrath of God. It is no passion, it is no mere emotion, but it is the moral antipathy of the holy God to sin and defilement as such,—a defilement

which separates between God and the sinful race that nevertheless He wills to save. Now this wrath is represented as having been affected by the propitiatory sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ: propitiation being the ground of reconciliation: reconciliation meaning that on the ground of what Christ has done for humanity that in God which hinders the outflow of His love has been removed, while all who believe are put into such relation to God, that the healing and purifying process may now begin, of which the conclusion is complete sanctification.

3. We have seen that under one aspect the vicarious office of Jesus Christ represents Him as in conflict with the evil one, and as effecting for man deliverance from the bondage and power of evil. It is under this aspect that Redemption must be considered, the term representing, so to speak, the price which the deliverance cost.

In the early history of the Church, and by many responsible men, it was thought that Christ paid a ransom to the evil one as the condition of man's deliverance. That view did not survive Anselm's refutation. But a similar notion has corrupted Christian doctrine a good deal since; the notion, namely, that Christ paid a ransom price by His death to someone in order that man might be redeemed from bondage to evil. This misapprehension has arisen from the circumstance that the Greek word for ransom has been rendered by theologians by the word redemption, a Latin word which does not convey the same idea. In the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, the Greek word for ransom represents a Hebrew word which has definite reference to sacrifice; it therefore represents what the Lord intended. The idea of compensation forms no part of its suggestion or significance; and, therefore, the question, to whom the ransom was paid, ought never to have arisen. The Hebrew reader would understand the

reference to be to the sacrificial work of the Lord Jesus Christ; and what that sacrificial work was would need to be sought elsewhere.

But while there was no ransom paid to anyone, nevertheless His blood, or life, was what it cost Him to gain the victory for us for ever over him who had the power of death. Through death Christ destroyed him who had the power of death, that is, the devil (Heb. ii. 14, 15). The Good Shepherd gave His life for the sheep. In Gethsemane, and on the Cross, Christ gained a personal victory over the great enemy of man. The benefit of this victory all may share, for the common foe is weakened for ever; and to effect this was part of the work of Christ.

We are not told much about that mysterious conflict, and conjecture is vain; but the fact that through agony, of which we have no conception, a victory was won, is a blessed fact. If we say that the price paid for it was infinite, we shall probably not exceed the truth. None can imagine the horribleness of the evil to be faced, as none can conceive the susceptibility and the dignity of Him who became our champion.

IV

It will be interesting, perhaps it is needful, to glance at the history of the doctrine so far as to indicate the elements that have come later into the Christian creed.

In the early Church a singular view, suggested by Clement, was formulated by Origen, who affirmed that the death of Christ was a ransom price paid to Satan in compensation for his lost rights in humanity. Apart from this view, which was effectually set aside by Anselm, special stress was laid in the early Church on the doctrine of the Mystical Union. Here the idea that comes into prominence is that of the vicarious dying unto sin of the

Lord Jesus on behalf of humanity, wherein He pledges Himself to effect in man really what in Him was effected sacramentally or representatively. It is, indeed, true that Dorner has sought to maintain that as early as Justin the doctrine of substitution, or vicarious punishment, is to be seen. But this is an extreme position. Dorner has been refuted by Pressensé and others, who show that no such doctrine was known to Justin; while illustration of the prevalent belief is abundant in both Augustine and Athanasius.

Augustine often speaks of the restoration of our fallen nature by Christ. No doubt he sometimes speaks as though this were effected by the incarnation. Nevertheless he is frequent in affirming that Christ was the true sin-offering of which that under the law was only a shadow. He says of Christ that He died unto sin sacramentally that we might die unto sin actually. He, the sinless One, was mystically united with our sinful nature; and hence it became possible for Him, who did not need on His own account to die, to die for our sakes as the pledge or surety for us, that, through His virtue, we should die unto sin and live unto righteousness.

The thought in the mind of Augustine is never that which is represented by the modern term imputation, nor that which is represented by the notion of a forensic justification. These potent ideas of later theologians are not the ideas of Augustine. His belief is in the mystical union of Christ with those whose nature He assumed. This is with him a governing idea, and it is to this that he sees the Apostle Paul referring when he speaks of Christ being in the "likeness of flesh." This mystical union made that possible which otherwise could not have been. He took our flesh upon Him. The curse of sin fell on Him: and through Him the righteousness of God becomes ours, because He puts us into right relation to

God, and thus begins the work which ends in the absolute death unto sin of the regenerated nature. His idea is not that Christ died to appease the wrath of God, but rather that by this mystical union death, or the curse of sin, accrued to Christ, and righteousness to those who believe. He certainly does speak of the blood of Christ as the price paid for man's redemption; but whatever he may mean by that, he does not mean what Origen had taught, that Christ paid by His death a compensation to Satan. His thought is in quite another direction. He is thinking of the eternal law of holiness which needed to be fulfilled if the righteous Father was to forgive. Christ died unto sin for us, fulfilling the requirements of that law, and through Him we die unto sin. To the eternal law of holiness mankind, so to speak, stood in debt. That debt Christ paid. The figure is maintained in both clauses, but it is a figure. The fact is that we are incorporated with Christ by faith; and, like Him, and through Him, die unto sin and live unto righteousness, and so fulfil on our part the law which He, our Surety, vicariously and sacramentally fulfilled for us.

Athanasius is in substantial agreement with Augustine. The problem and the solution as he conceived them may be presented in a few words. The problem was this. Death had been threatened at the beginning as the penalty of transgression,—a death consisting in estrangement from God, the only source of life, and implying the complete ruin of man. On the one hand, the divine veracity in threatening must be upheld, while, on the other hand, God's moral creation must not be left to perish in its alienation, as that would be inconsistent with the divine goodness. The problem was how to safeguard the divine veracity, and at the same time, under the promptings of mercy, to effect the salvation of men. The solution of the problem is found in the doctrine of the Logos or Word.

Christ alone is competent to renew men. He becomes incarnate; the Word becomes flesh, with a view to the atoning sacrifice. He took our nature on Him, a nature subject to the corruption of death. He offered it to the Father, delivering it to death of His own will, a vicarious act for us all. All died in Him, and thus the law requiring death was met once for all by Him in our nature, and love and veracity are in equipoise. Athanasius is clear on the vicarious character of the Lord's death, but he does not mean by this that Christ was punished for the sinners. It is quite another idea that has possession of his mind. Christ dying a ransom for man means that, in the way described, the law of holiness, which is the expression of the very nature of God, is satisfied in Christ.

With both Augustine and Athanasius sin is regarded in its effects rather than in itself, and the aim is to vindicate the divine veracity while giving scope to the divine love. Sin is a disease which can only be removed by the renewal of man, and this is secured by the incoming and indwelling of the divine Logos or Word, Jesus Christ.

If we now pass on to Anselm and the scholastics, we shall find ourselves in quite a different atmosphere. Other ideas will be presented to us than those on which emphasis has been laid in the pages of this essay, and other than those of the writers whose views have now been expounded. Athanasius, as we have seen, held sin to be a disease which has defiled man's nature, and needs to be cured. Anselm conceives of sin as a debt which must be paid. The one regards sin in its effects, viewing it in a practical light. The other regards sin in its nature, and becomes at once speculative and scholastic. Anselm's scheme of thought is shaped by his leading idea. The motive of the atonement is not the love of God, but God's sense of what is justly due to Himself; and the method of the salvation is not the regeneration of man, in order to his

own fulfilment of the will of God, so much as amends to God for the wrong done to Him by sin. Sin is an insult to His honour, for which satisfaction must be made. The Son of God by His death has made this; He alone could do this. His death on the cross was the voluntary payment by Him on our behalf of this debt which we were not of ourselves able to pay. Hence the necessity of the atonement; not to compensate Satan, as Origen taught, —that view is put aside,—but as a satisfaction to God: not that the death of Christ was our punishment inflicted on the innocent One in our stead; that view had not yet appeared; it came later as men departed further from the simplicity of Scripture.

Anselm's scheme of thought appealed to the men of his time. He stood at the beginning of a period called the Scholastic Period, of which the characteristics were a love of abstract thought, of logical precision of statement, and of dialectic subtleties. Ideas that gave the dialectician trouble, because they did not admit of scientific statement, fell into disfavour. Problems involving the conception of free will, of sin as a disease of human nature, of the mystical union between Christ and man, and of the mystic life flowing from faith and fellowship with Christ, do not admit of scholastic treatment. Hence there is nothing in Anselm about dying unto sin in Christ and rising unto righteousness with Him. On the other hand, undue emphasis is laid on expressions in Scripture which seem to be rather illustrations of truth than expositions of it. Be this as it may, Anselm supplants Athanasius. It is like the evening star in place of the sun.

Scholastic doctrine prevailed till time gave birth to Luther and Calvin. Luther's doctrine was shaped under controversy by his antagonism to Romish conceptions. A brief reference to the position of things must suffice. The Church of Rome taught that the original righteousness

which the first man possessed was no part of man's nature, but was a supernatural gift added thereto, and that at the Fall man lost this. The divine image remained, but the divine likeness or similitude was gone. Man lost no natural faculty, was still capable of good, except that, as the inevitable result of the Fall, his natural faculties fell into disorder. His actual loss was that of a supernatural gift and not of any natural power. So the Romanist maintained.

The Reformers, led by Luther, held that what man lost by the Fall was nothing superadded and supernatural, but something which naturally belonged to him. The image of God was obliterated. The capacity, aptitude, power for spiritual things was lost. The faculty whereby God is known, and the will to do what God required, were lost; and there was no recuperative power left in him. More than this. Not only was man thus deprived and helpless, but sin took possession of him, rushed in, so to speak, to fill the vacuum. There followed "an ineffable corruption of his whole nature, with all its powers"; so that he became essentially and by nature sinful. So Luther maintained.

Far-reaching consequences were involved in this doctrine, but they need not be considered here. We need only notice the bearing of all this on the doctrine of justification. The whole work of Christ in justifying was regarded as external to the man, as would naturally be the case since man had left to him neither faculty for God nor power of co-operation. Justification became acquittal from sin and from its penalties as the result of the appropriating of the merits of Christ by faith, the righteousness of Christ being imputed to the believer though not possessed by him. It was taught, moreover, not simply, as had already been taught, that Christ's obedience was an acceptable sacrifice to God, giving meaning and efficacy to His death, but that His obedience was accepted of God,

instead of the obedience we owed and could not pay. And still further. For the first time in history the death of Christ was viewed as a vicarious punishment, inflicted by the Father on Him instead of on us. He, our Substitute, was punished and accursed of God for us. Luther does not hesitate to say this. God could not pardon without satisfaction. Justice required the punishment of sin. But it was conceived consistent with justice so far to relax the law, that another, and an innocent person, should be punished instead of the sinner. Hence it was inferred that Christ endured in His Passion the pains of hell, and this was regarded as a necessary part of the idea of satisfaction. Calvin consents to the doctrine of Christ's substituted obedience and punishment. Our liability and obligation to punishment and the curse of sin were transferred to Christ. He suffered the actual torments of the damned. So taught Calvinism. If Anselm is properly objected to on account of what he omits, these have surely added to the teaching of Scripture much that is utterly repugnant to its spirit.

For the first time in the history of the Christian Church we now get such dogmas as these: that the sufferings of Christ were inflicted by the Father; that the punishment of sin is remitted because an equivalent punishment has been borne; that the alone guiltless is accounted guilty, and that the unholy are accounted holy by an artificial system of imputation. Certainly Athanasius reads no such thoughts into the Scriptures, and it is not easy to understand how conscience could ever be brought to acquiesce in such notions. It is not to be wondered at that a whole crop of misbeliefs sprang up from this mischievous sowing; but these need not detain us.

In conclusion. If the account given above of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ is substantially true, then clearly

the Redeemer's work cannot be confined to His office as Teacher. Man's supreme need is not deliverance from ignorance, but from sin, and it was to effect this that Christ came and died. Our moral need is greater than our intellectual need. We know more than we do, and the problem is how to bridge the chasm between knowledge and obedience, how to overcome moral reluctance, how to get rid of sin.

No doubt the teaching of Christ concerning God and man, concerning life and duty, concerning the temporal and the eternal, is most precious; the Sermon on the Mount is a noble charter; the Parable of the Prodigal Son is a priceless boon. Beyond doubt we cannot think too highly of His example of self-sacrificing love, as we find it in the Gospels. No doubt His death may be regarded as confirmatory of His doctrine, and of the fidelity of His spirit. But Scripture says more than this concerning His death. He is not said to save us by His teaching, or by His example, not even by His example of self-sacrificing love. In all these respects He may be admitted to be supreme, but in them He is not unique. A unique virtue, however, is attributed to Him by His apostles, and is involved in His own words. There is something which is true of Him, and of no other. There is an objective work wrought by Christ on behalf of sinful humanity, which can only be described by the term unique. And if so, then He is separated from all other beings whatsoever. That is our contention and belief. Consequently we regard Him as having a unique claim on the love and allegiance of men.

Writers on the subject of the atonement often lay supreme emphasis on the fact that Christ, in dying on the Cross for us, removed the condemnation into which sin had brought the human race. Supreme emphasis has been laid in these pages on the fact that the object of the atonement is to produce holiness. This aspect of the work of Christ,

in the writer's view, is the one that needs to be insisted upon to-day. As to God's judgment concerning sin, happily there can be no doubt that sin lies beneath His condemnation. It cannot be otherwise. The sense of fitness within us testifies that it must be so. Conscience would be robbed of its meaning if it were not so. The apostle declares that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. The relation that exists between our unrighteousness and God's righteousness is that of condemnation; it would be inexpressibly sad to conceive it otherwise. The evidence of the universality of sin is complete. Sin means death in the only sense in which death is to be feared. Death means dissolution; in nature, the dissolution which involves the loss of the natural life; in the soul, the dissolution of the inward life of righteousness, which is the true life of man. Sin is more. Besides destroying our true life, it calls down on us the condemnation of God. That is our condition, condemned by our own hearts, condemned by Him who is greater than our hearts, and who knows all things. That the death of Christ had relation to this condition may be freely and thankfully admitted, without saying that this is the aspect of the subject that has supreme consequence to-day, when the moral tendencies of the doctrine of atonement have been so seriously impugned. The aim of this essay has been to show that the Christian doctrine of atonement cannot be rightly interpreted by any who obscure its moral purpose. This is its supreme purpose. Its great aim is to produce holiness.

VI

NEW TESTAMENT WITNESS CONCERNING CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

By SAMUEL NEWTH

VI

New Testament Witness concerning Christian Churches

"All the churches of Christ."—Rom. xvi. 16.
"So ordain I in all the churches."—1 Cor. vii. 17.
"As in all the churches of the saints."—1 Cor. xiv. 33.
"The brother whose praise in the gospel is spread through all the churches."—2 Cor. viii. 18.
"That which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches."—2 Cor. xi. 28.
"The churches of Judæa which were in Christ."—Gal. i. 22.
"The churches of God which are in Judæa."—1 Thess. ii. 14.
"The church of God which is at Corinth."—1 Cor. i. 2.
"The church that is in their house."—Rom. xvi. 5.

Churches, and not The Church, are the subject of the present essay. The latter term, as used in the New Testament, bears a very special and a very sacred meaning; and it is misleading, may we not add, irreverent, to use it in senses widely diverse from this. When, for instance, one tells us that his friend has "entered the church," meaning thereby that he has become a clergyman; another, that an acquaintance has "gone over to the church," meaning that he has attached himself to the Episcopal Church, whether of England or America; and yet a third, that some of his neighbours are seeking to "destroy the church," when all he means, or ought to mean, is that they are seeking to remove some invidious privileges conferred upon the clergy of one denomination, and to free them from irksome obligations consequently laid upon them,—then, in either case, language is used which is both alien to the New Testament,

and a stumbling-block to many through the erroneous inferences it suggests.

In the New Testament, "The Church" denotes the great company which no man can number, which is gathered before the throne of God out of every nation, of all tribes and peoples and tongues, and which is figuratively described as the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The places in which the term is so used are, it should be noticed, comparatively few, and occur in passages which are prophetical rather than historical, when the writer is speaking of the ideal and future, and not of what is present and actual. In all historical passages the New Testament writers speak of churches either explicitly or by implication; the singular number, with the definite article prefixed, being used only when it is some one out of "all the churches" that is spoken of; and even then, for the most part, some differentiating epithet is appended, making it clear to which church out of the many reference is made. The passages quoted above exhibit the predominating language of the New Testament on this matter, and show how great is the contrast between the thought and speech of the apostles and that of many who claim to be in a pre-eminent degree their successors.

I

Churches, as we meet with them in the apostolic writings, are companies, whether small or large, of Christian men and women, associated for purposes directly arising out of their personal relationship to Christ. And by a Christian we mean one who is trusting in Christ as his Saviour, hearkening to Christ as his Teacher, and serving Christ as his Master and Lord. To this association he is drawn by the attraction of a common affection and a common interest. No one who has so "learned Christ"

needs that any should suggest to him such an association, or that any command should be laid upon him to seek it. That he should do so follows necessarily from the constitution of his nature, and from the circumstances of the case. The spontaneous response of his heart to the mercies he has received, prompts him to render to Christ the homage we denominate worship; or, in Scripture phraseology, to "bow the knee to Him" in the exalted dignity—"the name which is above every name"—to which He has been raised, and to praise Him by the glad confession that He is "Lord of all." His newly-awakened sense of the beauty of the Saviour's character and the blessedness of His mission of mercy, impels him to an open testimony to His wondrous work and inspiring words; and his realisation of the meaning of the new relationship into which he has been brought, moves him to the earnest endeavour to do to others, and for them, all that he knows his Lord would have him to do,—having freely received, he would freely give. In order to fulfil efficiently this threefold purpose of worship, witness, and work, he finds himself dependent upon the help of others like-minded with himself. For, though he could in some measure fulfil them alone and apart, experience and instinct conspire in teaching that he can best do it when united in fellowship with others, and aided by their co-operation and sympathy; and it is of his best that he would give to his Lord.

II

But while the association of Christians in churches thus follows by a natural sequence from their personal union with Christ, the inquiry at once arises,—are any directions given by our Lord, or His disciples, as to the manner in which this association is to be regulated, the functions it may properly assume, the distribution of those functions

amongst its members, and the authority of the associated body over the individuals composing it?

In times not far removed from our own, the answer to this inquiry was very commonly sought under the assumption that such directions would be given, if given at all, in the form of definite enactments, laying down for all time a completed plan of organisation from which nothing was to be taken away, and to which nothing was to be added. The almost unquestioned acceptance of this assumption was one of the hurtful results which flowed from that serious defect under which both professed theologians and private Christians then laboured, namely, the absence of perspective in their studies of the sacred records, and the consequent failure to apprehend, in any adequate measure, the progressiveness of the divine method in the education and discipline of mankind.

Instead of assuming that because of old formal directions were supplied for the construction of the tabernacle, together with a code of laws authoritatively prescribing the forms of its worship and the appointment of its priests, *therefore* the fellowship and worship of Christian churches were to be regulated in like manner, the very opposite to this ought to have been anticipated.

For, under the Christian dispensation, man is not, in the realm of his personal relationship with God, subjected to a system of formal law, but is emancipated into the guidance and control of great and far-reaching principles. Infancy, childhood, youth, and manhood are not more distinctly marked in the life of the individual than they are in the religious history of the race. The primeval, the patriarchal, the Jewish, and the Christian, are four connected and progressive dispensations — four successive classes in the school of the Great Teacher. Both in the lessons taught and in the methods of discipline employed, there is a corresponding advance from a lower to a higher

stage. In the first, man is taught his dependence upon God—the truth which lies at the foundation of all religion, and which may be summarised in the words, "apart from Me ye can do nothing." In the second, he is trained to the exercise of faith, of faith in its simpler forms as suited to the childhood of the race; of faith, too, whose rewards were often visible to sense and not long delayed. In the Mosaic economy, with its moral and ceremonial law, its sacrifices and oft-repeated purifications, its distinctions of clean and unclean, its solemn sanctuary and its holy place, man is further taught his own impurity and the need of holiness. Christianity, while it embodies and expands all these previous lessons, advances to a higher stage, and her mission is to train man, not to a religion of mere dependence on a Creator, nor of simple faith in a Lord and King, nor to a religion of moral righteousness only, but to a religion of holy love. Her distinctive formula is embodied in the words: "God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him." Christianity stands related to Judaism as manhood is related to youth. The Jews, as still in a state of immaturity, were governed by laws. As the apostle expresses it, they were as children "under guardians and stewards." Though the heirs of a great inheritance, they differed "nothing from a bondservant." Christianity confers the full privileges of sonship. The age of immaturity gives place to the age of trusted and honoured affection. The son rises to an intelligent perception of his father's purposes. The father's will is no longer an expression of pure authority to be unhesitatingly submitted to, but an exhibition of wisdom and moral excellence in which he increasingly delights. Obedience is no longer mere duty, it is a holy pleasure. Service is rendered "not by constraint, but willingly." Law is displaced by love. Such a spirit has plainly passed beyond the "beggarly rudiments." To place it under

the rigid constraint of formal laws would be to impose upon it a terrible bondage. It would be to sentence a man to the humiliation of a lasting pupilage. It would be the rejection by a father of the intelligent and honouring affection of a son for the blind and imperfect fondness of a child. To no such bondage, however, have we been subjected. We are not under law, but under grace. The appeal, in the determination of what is for us right or wrong before God, is not made to definite enactments, but to our own consciousness of what is in harmony with the character of God, and with His will as expressed in His written word. Christian obligation is thus wider and more spiritual than the Jewish. That which under the Law had of necessity a limited range of application, and was referable for the most part to external conduct, becomes expanded into a principle of far-reaching authority, extending to the innermost springs of thought and feeling. The personal discipline of the soul thus becomes of the very highest kind. It is no longer the passive discipline of simple abstinence from things forbidden, but is an earnest and perpetual striving after the highest excellence. God's voice in the soul is no longer a solemnly reiterated "thou shalt not," but the gentler and mightier "learn of Me." Our aim is not just to *do* what God has bidden, but to become what God is.

Such, under the Christian dispensation, is God's method of dealing with us in our personal relations with Himself; and it being so, we ought to anticipate that a like method would be followed when He is dealing with us in our relations with one another. If, in the high matters pertaining to the former, He honours us by confiding in our love, it would be a strange phenomenon if in that department of our religious life where we honour Him in His creatures, and serve our Lord by serving the least of these His brethren, Christian fidelity and Christian affection should not be trusted to observe His will and interpret

His wishes. To one who has felt the joy of the spirit of freedom which Christianity breathes, and how greatly man is blessed by the confidence God condescends to repose in him, and how healthful is the exercise to which his spiritual powers are put by the constant effort of studying the character of God and the great principles of His government, and of applying these to the varying circumstances of human life, it would be a perplexing anomaly if, in the matter of church organisation, the Christian man were placed under the fetters of a rigid law. That any, therefore, should assume the existence of such a law, or have assented to those who affirmed it, without surprise at its inconsistency with the spirit of the gospel, and without the consciousness of the incapacity implied by it, would appear to be next to an impossibility. Experience, however, teaches how common it is, even in these Christian times, to advance no further in the religious life than the earlier stages, and how many never get beyond the Judaic state. Law rather than love rules within them. Their main inquiry is, what *must* we do? rather than what *may* or *can* we do? And hence as the gospel says very little of what we *must* do—contains hardly anything in the form of a positive and absolute precept, and they have not yet learnt to act from the promptings of a generous love, their religious life is at the minimum, they are "all their lifetime subject to bondage," and it is nothing to be wondered if, in regard to the government of churches, they are altogether legal in their thoughts and requirements.

Here we are reminded how intimately the power of rightly investigating matters relative to the spiritual life is dependent upon the state and style of our personal piety. God's ways and thoughts are not as man's, and unless we are earnestly seeking to press forward in God's ways, and are diligently striving to apprehend His great and holy thoughts, the record of His spiritual work in the world

will be set before us in vain. It will speak in a language that sounds strangely in our ears; its characters will appear grotesque and unmeaning; the key to unlock its secret treasures will not be ours; and we "cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged."

III

But, it will be asked, does not the apostolic organisation of the churches supply us with an authoritative model, in accordance with which all future churches should be framed; and is not therefore all we need for our guidance to be found in the example they have set us?

The right answer to this inquiry can only be gained from a careful and unprejudiced study of the history of their procedure as given in the apostolic writings: and to such a study we now invite our readers.

1. The story of the apostolic organisation of the churches commences naturally with that of the first church, the church at Jerusalem. At its first meeting, held within the seven or eight days which intervened between the Ascension and the day of Pentecost, it proceeded, on the suggestion of Peter, to the election of an apostle in the place of Judas. Respecting this meeting, we are told that the number of those present was about one hundred and twenty, and that all alike took part in the important business then transacted. A few days later occurred the solemn inauguration of this church, when, on the day of Pentecost, it received its baptism of consecration and its public investiture with power from on high. Passing over many of the circumstances connected with this event, and dwelling only upon those which, directly or indirectly, bear upon our present inquiry, two significant facts present themselves to notice. These are, first, that on this day a

large number of brethren were assembled (Acts ii. 1) in a private house (Acts ii. 2). At the least there would be the hundred and twenty previously spoken of, and in all probability many more; for as there were five hundred brethren to whom our Lord showed Himself after His resurrection, we may fairly suppose a larger gathering on an occasion which would bring to Jerusalem many who did not usually dwell there. And secondly, that whether the number were larger or smaller, the tongue-like flames "sat upon each one of them, and they were *all* filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." This, the devout reader will acknowledge, was not a mere wonder, but a "sign." God teaches by symbol as well as by word, and those flames of fire and those other tongues have their meaning. Four lessons, then specially needed, and which those present, accustomed as they were to pictorial teaching, would readily recognise, were set forth in a vivid and impressive form. These are—

(*a*) *That God's truth is to be made known to all men.* The spirit of exclusiveness, whether springing from the misuse of Jewish privilege or from intellectual pride, is not to be the spirit of Christianity. God's truth is God's gift to man, and no one may withhold it from his fellow. It is not a "mystery," a secret to be wrapped up and hidden, but a "gospel," glad tidings of great joy to all people. God Himself leads the way in this world-wide proclamation of the truth. The power of His Spirit constrains His servants, overpowers their natural hesitation and unwillingness, and even against themselves makes them, so to speak, that "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judæa and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Lyba about Cyrene, and sojourners from Rome, Cretes and Arabians," every one in his own tongue, heard them speaking the mighty works of God.

(*b*) With no less distinctness did the sign teach, secondly, *That the special blessings resulting from the Saviour's death were open to the acceptance of all.* The gift of the Holy Spirit, in a measure altogether distinct from any earlier bestowal, is set before us in the Scriptures as the result of the Saviour's work. It was so announced by the forerunner: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost"; and it was so affirmed by the Saviour Himself when He said: "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter . . . even the Spirit of truth." This specially Christian gift, this crowning boon of the Saviour's mercy, is now conferred upon all in this praying and waiting assembly: they were *all* filled with the Holy Ghost; all, not a favoured few only, not the distinguished leaders only, not the chosen apostles only, but all in that large assembly, where, though possibly there may have been a Nicodemus and a Joseph of Arimathæa, yet certainly the large majority were humble and undistinguished men.

(*c*) Again, the peculiar form under which the power of the Spirit was manifested in those who received the gift teaches, *That the primary work given to Christ's servants to do is to publish abroad His truth.* "They began *to speak* with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." It was by the gift of the Spirit that they were to be "clothed with power" for their work, and the immediate effect of the bestowal of that gift was to impel them to "speak the mighty works of God." Most distinctly, then, were the followers of Christ taught that their special work in the world was not priestly, but prophetical; not to offer sacrifice, but to make known His message of love and mercy—in apostolic phrase, to wield "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

(*d*) Further, the "sign" teaches, *That participation in this Christian work was not to be confined to any one*

class of Christ's followers. To be the minister of God, in the sense of a servant *commissioned* to declare His will, is an honour which all ages have regarded as amongst the highest within human reach; an honour to be jealously guarded from intrusion, and which, in most cases, has been appropriated to a family or tribe. So was it with the Mosaic priesthood, the honour might be attained only by a few. But not so now: "the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." "Are not all these which speak Galilæans?" Outcasts, as many of them were in the estimate of current opinion, they are *all* God's chosen instruments, "clothed with power from on high," to go forth as His messengers, and declare amongst the nations the glad tidings of great joy.

Of this company of believers, thus inaugurated, we are further told that they were in the habit of joining in an act of daily worship in the temple, and of afterwards partaking of a common meal in their own place of meeting (Acts ii. 46; v. 42); and that so great was the bond of brotherly affection amongst its members that each regarded all that he possessed as property to be held in trust for the common good. Throughout the period embraced by the first five chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, the church at Jerusalem is a single assembly of worshipping and loving Christians. Organisation has proceeded no further than its first stage of voluntary association—voluntary, that is, so far as concerns human relations, for "the Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved." Of organisation there is just so much as implied in this, and nothing more—no officers, no distinction of function amongst the associated brethren. Service is rendered by one to another, not in virtue of office, but in the exercise of the gifts with which he had been endowed. He who had wealth, because he had it, gave to the needy; he who had the gift of knowledge and utterance, because he had

it, communicated what he knew to the ignorant; and those who had the largest knowledge about Christ, the apostles, were on that account the most prominent in the instruction of the brethren. They "had all things common."

2. In the sixth chapter of the Acts an account is given us of a second step taken by the church at Jerusalem in the matter of organisation. Superadded to the one assembly are its seven officials, equal in rank and identical in function. But what the nature of that function was, we have no sufficient information for determining. We are indeed told that the occasion of their appointment was the complaint of the Hellenistic Jews, that their widows were neglected in the "daily ministration"; but what is indicated thereby, whether it were a distribution of alms to the poor, or a distribution of food, or attendance upon those met at the social meal, or any two or more of these combined, is altogether uncertain.

Further, it is to be noticed that no name or title distinctive of their office is anywhere given to the men now appointed to "this business." As a body of officers, they are nowhere else referred to, nor is any instance recorded of the actual performance of the duty here assigned to them. In one passage only have we any subsequent recognition of their appointment, and there Philip the evangelist is simply described as "one of the seven" (Acts xxi. 8). Moreover, the tenure of office by "the seven" was but temporary. For shortly after the death of Stephen, the members of the Jerusalem church were all scattered abroad, "except the apostles." Accordingly we find Philip, the only one of the seven, besides Stephen, of whom there is any separate mention, engaged in preaching the gospel in all the cities between Azotus and Cæsarea, and subsequently dwelling with his family in the latter

city. Any further attendance upon widows at Jerusalem was therefore, in his case, precluded. Whether, if the service of the seven at Jerusalem had not been so suddenly and so sharply interrupted, their office would in time have become identical with that afterwards known as the deacons', is one of those imaginary questions that can never be answered; and certainly it should not be assumed that the two offices were identical.

3. The three or four years following the death of Stephen present a new and important chapter in Christian history. We now read of many centres of Christian life and love instead of one. "They that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word," and with such success that companies of disciples are gathered in various parts of Palestine and Syria. The first breach, moreover, is now made in the wall of partition between the Jew and Gentile; and it is interesting to notice how gradually, yet surely, events move on towards its accomplishment. First, the gospel is preached in Samaria, and Christian love repeals the law of exclusiveness, which forbade the Jew to have dealings with the Samaritans. "Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ." Next, the Ethiopian eunuch, a Gentile, to some extent indeed embracing Judaism and embraced by it, for "he had come to Jerusalem for to worship," but as a eunuch inadmissible to the congregation of Israel,—this man is received by the same Philip into the congregation of the Lord, and becomes, as Eusebius expresses it, "the first-fruits of the believers throughout the world" (*H. E.* ii. 1). After this we hear of the conversion of Cornelius, with the distinct acknowledgment by the church at Jerusalem that "to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life." And lastly, contemporaneously with this event, perhaps rather somewhat preceding it, is the founding of

the first Gentile church in Antioch through the labours of "the men of Cyprus and Cyrene," who in that city "spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus."

One striking fact of this period is the almost complete withdrawal of the apostles from the scene. It might have been expected that they would have been the foremost in this work of evangelisation, and have assumed the post of leadership and command. What were the reasons that led them to remain behind in Jerusalem, it is not for us positively to determine. It may have been that with the remembrance of their former weakness, when they all "left Him and fled," they were now more distrustful of themselves, and waited for a clearer intimation of the divine will until they left the city. It may have been that they did not yet realise that *all* that was involved in their Lord's command to stay in Jerusalem until they were clothed with power from on high was now fulfilled. Or it may even have been that some special intimation had been given them that for a season they should withdraw into comparative retirement. But, whatever the reason, the fact remains that in this outburst of Christian activity the apostles took no leading part. It did not originate in any proposal of theirs; God's providence originated it by scattering the members of the one church. Instead of taking a prominent share in it, they did but slowly and cautiously recognise it. It was not by apostolic lips that the gospel was first preached to the Gentiles, nor by apostolic labours that the first Gentile church was gathered. They send Peter and John to Samaria, but that was after they had heard of Philip's successful labours there; and though it is by Peter that Cornelius is received into Christian fellowship, this event occurs at the close of the period we are speaking of, when, in consequence of the great work which had been already wrought, they began to leave their retirement and visit the disciples. "It came to pass as Peter went throughout all

parts, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda" (Acts ix. 32). The great work of church extension now accomplished is presented to us as springing from the free impulse of the Spirit on the hearts of believers. It was not the result of the labours of persons officially appointed thereto. We read of no special commission granted to these zealous Christians. No call to office is given to these founders of churches. No apostolic ordination is conferred upon these first evangelists. The only commission is the general commission given to every man to tell what he knows, and testify of what he has seen. The only call is that universal one, in virtue of which the strong is called to help the weak, and the rich to aid the poor. It is God who ordains by the gifts He bestows and the opportunities He provides. It is the Spirit who chooses, as He sees fit, the instruments of this wider manifestation of His power.

Another fact also to be noticed is the entire silence of the history respecting any appointment to office in these newly-gathered churches. Occasions are not wanting when reference to those who held office in them would naturally be made, if any such existed. Peter and John came to Samaria on an important mission as the representatives of the apostles, but no special charges are given to any recognised heads of the community, they themselves appoint no elders, and they leave without directing the appointment of any. When the trembling and astonished Saul is brought into Damascus, it is "a certain disciple" named Ananias who is sent to minister to him. When Dorcas falls sick and dies, and is laid in the upper chamber, it is "the disciples" who send two men to Peter, and it is to "the saints and widows" that Peter presents her alive. And of the church at Antioch, we are simply told that "even for a whole year Paul and Barnabas were gathered together with the church, and taught much people."

4. A fresh period in the history of Christian evangelism is opened up to us, when, in the providence of God, the apostles, who had hitherto tarried in Jerusalem, now understood that the time had come in which they must set themselves to fulfil their Lord's command, and "go into all the world"; when, too, from the church at Antioch, Barnabas and Saul were "sent forth by the Holy Ghost" on the work whereunto He had called them. It is now that, for the first time, we read of elders in the churches, namely, in the church at Jerusalem, and in the four Asiatic churches founded by Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey. Of the time and manner of the appointment of these in the church at Jerusalem there is no mention; and respecting the nature of their office, we have no positive statement. From the title, we can infer only that it was some such general superintendence as the head of a family might exercise over his household. The social habits of the Easterns, with their strong family feeling and their reverence for age, might naturally lead here, as it had already done in the synagogue, to the appointment for the most part of elder men to the chief place of authority, and so to the use of the term presbyter or elder as the designation of the office. Concerning the duties of the elder at a subsequent period, we have fuller information. At present we have only the name and the single fact that it was to the elders that the money raised by the Christians at Antioch for the relief of the brethren in Judæa was sent; and as the natural inference is, that they undertook the charge of the gifts thus intrusted to them, we are left to the conclusion that now at least their office was not confined to spiritual concerns.

The appointment of elders in the churches of Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and the Pisidian Antioch took place when the two missionaries who had founded these churches were taking farewell of them on their return to the city "from

whence they had been committed to the grace of God for the work which they had 'now fulfilled.'" Respecting the manner of their appointment, all that is told us is contained in the short passage which tells us that "when they (Paul and Barnabas) had appointed for them (the disciples) elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them (the disciples) to the Lord in whom they had believed." But whether we are to understand by this that the two missionaries nominated to the office those whom they deemed the most suitable, or that, following the method pursued by the apostles in the election of the Seven, they suggested to the several churches that they should choose some of their number, is wholly indeterminate. The language employed admits of either interpretation.

That more than one elder was appointed in each church, though not expressly stated, is more than probable. It was certainly so in the church at Jerusalem, and so, too, at a later date in that at Ephesus; for, when reaching Miletus on his last journey to Syria, Paul "sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church." We may therefore safely presume that it was so here also.

Of any official members in the church at Antioch in Syria, there is no mention. The names are given us of certain gifted brethren there, described as prophets and teachers; but that they are so described is no evidence that they sustained any official relation to the church. They were men specially qualified by the Holy Spirit to edify others by their gifts of utterance, the teachers being those who were fitted for the quieter and more continuous instruction of the disciples; and the prophets those upon whom the Holy Spirit came more suddenly, and at intervals, and impelled to speak in a more thrilling and impassioned style upon the higher themes of the spiritual life. Whilst favoured with the presence of such men as these, the church at Antioch, like the church at Jerusalem while

the apostles were still amongst them, would feel no need for formally appointed officials. None at least are referred to, and the silence is expressive. For it is not a mere handful of believers that is set before us, a feeble company in some obscure spot, unequal to the ordinary functions of a Christian church, but a vigorous and active community in the metropolis of Syria, entering warmly into the spirit of Christian evangelism, alive to the claims of their suffering brethren in Judæa, and sending forth its missionaries to the busy cities of Asia. We read of no elders in Antioch; and that no such office as that commonly understood as the deacons' had been created there, is shown by the fact that Barnabas and Saul are employed by the church to convey their pecuniary aid to the brethren in Judæa. And this was not done because the two missionaries happened to be then going to Jerusalem, for this was the business on which they went; and as soon as they had discharged it, they "returned from Jerusalem" (Acts xii. 25).

5. The fifteenth chapter of the Acts records for us certain memorable proceedings in which, for the first time, the sisterhood of the churches is openly recognised. Paul and Barnabas had just returned to Antioch from their Asiatic journeyings, and had given an account of their mission to the brethren there, as to men who had a right to expect it from them, and had a common interest in their work. It was at this epoch, when, as we may well suppose, the Christians in this city were rejoicing at the encouraging report now made to them, and probably preparing for new efforts, that "certain men came down from Judæa and taught the brethren, saying, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." These men, as the subsequent narrative shows, had received no commission from the church at Jerusalem. They came to Antioch on their own prompting, and the opportunity of exercising the gift

of teaching is freely conceded to them on the simple ground of their common brotherhood in Christ. Their testimony, however, is freely canvassed and warmly discussed, till ultimately Paul and Barnabas, with certain others, amongst whom was Titus (Gal. ii. 1), were appointed to go to Jerusalem about this question; and an interesting picture is presented of the simplicity of manners and community of feeling then exhibited by the Christians at Antioch, in the statement that they joined in accompanying their delegates over the first stage of their journey.

This reference to Jerusalem is the voluntary act of the church at Antioch, and not in consequence of any claim to authority on the part of the former. It was under the circumstances the most natural course to be pursued. The men who had troubled the church at Antioch and opposed its teachers had come down from Judæa, and had undesignedly, or otherwise, spoken as if they had received the sanction of the apostles and brethren there. It was therefore fitting to send, in the first place, to know whether this was indeed the case. In the brief statement of Acts xv. 2, we are told that the delegates were sent to consult "the apostles and elders" at Jerusalem; but that it is meant thereby that they were sent to consult them only is more than doubtful. In point of fact, the question at issue is discussed by the church at large; for on the arrival of the delegates they were received of "the church and the apostles and the elders"; and at a second meeting held "to consider the matter," the entire company of the brethren were present, and join in the decision arrived at. At the former meeting the discussion was started by "certain of the sect of the Pharisees who believed," affirming the necessity of circumcision and of the observance of the Mosaic law. More, as we gather from the words of Paul in the Epistle to the Galatians, was intended by this than the assertion of a general principle. One at least of

the delegates was an uncircumcised Gentile; and the words of the speakers were meant to apply to the Gentiles now present. A personal animus was thus introduced, and there was, Luke tells us, "much questioning": "to whom," Paul adds, "we gave place in the way of subjection, no, not for an hour."

The question thus submitted to the brethren at Jerusalem was, it should be noted, one in which all Christians had a common interest. It was not a point of internal economy, not a mere matter of private discipline, but a grave question affecting their common Christianity. It so happened that it first came up in a definite form at Antioch, but it concerned all churches, and not the least that church out of which, more or less directly, all churches had sprung. It affected the form in which Christianity was to be exhibited to the world, and their methods of labour as Christian evangelists. It affected also, and that most intimately, the communion of Christians with each other. It was therefore a service rendered to the brethren in Judæa, to bring the subject to their notice. Accordingly Paul is not directed by the Holy Spirit to settle the question at once, by an exercise of his apostolic authority. The will of God upon the matter had been distinctly made known to him, but he is not directed to authoritatively announce it. The question concerns the churches at large. He is therefore directed to go to Jerusalem. He "went up by revelation."

As the result of the discussion, the teaching of the "troublers" is emphatically disowned, and by a unanimous vote of the church, two brethren are courteously appointed to convey to Antioch in a written form its judgment on the question submitted to them. The transaction does not issue in the institution of any formal bond by which the union of the churches was to be maintained, still less in any by which the subordination of one to the other was either asserted or contemplated. The narrative given us is worthy

of careful study, not only for the facts which it relates, but also for those which are conspicuous by their absence; the more so that by giving it the title of the Council of Jerusalem, many have been led to identify it with those semi- and more than semi-political assemblies of later time, which, under the name of Councils, have wielded so unchristian a tyranny.

6. Coming now to the period embraced by the Pauline letters, we read of churches with two classes of church-officers, termed respectively bishops and deacons. They are named together for the first time in Phil. i. 1: "Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." The former of these two terms is now acknowledged, by all trustworthy expositors, to denote the same persons as those heretofore spoken of as elders.[1] As regards the nature of the office thus indifferently designated, no precise definition is given. The new name of "bishop" or "overseer" does but confirm what has before been gathered from the designation "elder," that the distinctive duty of the office was the general superintendence of the associated brethren — the care of their interests (1 Tim. iii. 5), and a watchful outlook against everything that would imperil their well-being, whether from within or without: "they watch in behalf of your souls" (Heb. xiii. 17). It was, as Peter teaches us, like that of the shepherd who feeds and tends the flock; in fact, the two words are conjoined as approximate synonyms, when he speaks of our Lord as the

[1] The evidence may be briefly summarised thus: 1. In three passages the two terms are expressly identified, viz. Acts xx. 17 compared with ver. 28, Tit. i. 5 compared with ver. 7, and 1 Pet. v. 1 compared with ver. 2. 2. In two other places bishops and deacons are spoken of, but no mention is made of presbyters, Phil. i. 1 and 1 Tim. iii. 3. In no instance are the three terms, bishops, presbyters, and deacons, found thus in combination.

"Shepherd and Bishop" of our souls (1 Pet. ii. 25). In the list of qualifications for this office given in the First Epistle to Timothy, are included a skilfulness in ruling and an aptness to teach; the latter being also described in the Epistle to Titus as the ability "to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers." Clearly, then, ruling and teaching are amongst the prominent functions of the office; yet not so exclusively as to preclude any who were able to edify the church from the due exercise of their gift in its proper season. "All can edify one by one, that all may learn, and all may be encouraged" (1 Cor. xiv. 31). But while all who were competent so to do might occasionally teach, it was upon the elders of the church, also called bishops, that the responsibility rested of providing for the regular and orderly instruction of the ecclesia. The duty was theirs specifically and emphatically.

Further, inasmuch as a plurality of pastors, whatever the name by which they are designated, was the rule in the apostolic churches, it would naturally come about that a distribution of function amongst them would to some extent be made. Those of their number who became noted for their skill in administration would have yielded to them the lead in ruling, and those who were pre-eminently gifted as preachers or teachers would, as a matter of course, take the more prominent share in the exhortation and instruction of the church. Hence, as might be expected, we read of some elders who "ruled well," of some "who labour (toil hard) in the word and in teaching," and of some also who were distinguished in both of these departments of service.

Respecting the duties of the deacons, nothing whatever is told us by the apostles. They are referred to in two passages only. One is that quoted above (Phil. i. 1), where they are simply named; and the name alone tells us nothing of their office. The term is exceedingly wide in its signification, and is applied in the New Testament to anyone

who may render to another any service of any kind, from the very highest, that rendered by our Lord Himself (Rom. xv. 8), down to the very lowest, that rendered by a personal attendant (Acts xiii. 5), and lower still, even to the wicked service of wicked men, who in 2 Cor. xi. 15 are called the "deacons of Satan."

The other passage is the third chapter of the First Epistle to Timothy, and this, though speaking of qualifications, is silent respecting duties. It tells us that deacons "must be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre"; that they must hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience; that before their appointment they must be proved, and that those only are to serve who are found irreproachable; that they are to be the husbands of one wife, and of a wife who conducts herself well; and, lastly, that they are able to maintain good order in their own households. To draw from this list of diaconal qualifications any exact delineation of diaconal duties, seems to me to demand more than a prophet's illumination. I, at least, can lay claim to no such superhuman skill, and must decline to accept the claims of any who may profess to possess it.

7. Of any further developments we have in the New Testament no record, not even of such a change as would be made, if in place of several bishops in a church one only were appointed. Still less is there any record of the creation of an office superior to that of the presbyter-bishop. The Epistles to Timothy and Titus have indeed been appealed to as showing that two young disciples of the Apostle Paul had been appointed to such an office; but the arguments by which this conclusion is reached rest upon a series of doubtful assumptions. Into the discussion of these we do not here enter; it is enough for our present purpose to note that they are assumptions, and that therefore the inferences

built upon them are too uncertain as a basis for an authoritative rule of church order. Advices given by Paul the aged to his son Timothy respecting his personal demeanour towards the Christian men and women[1] at Ephesus, are arbitrarily transformed into commissions of office; and an imaginary contrast is drawn between the charge given at Miletus to the Ephesian elders and that given to Timothy, to the effect that the former are invested with authority over the laity only, while the latter has authority over the clergy also. Even 1 Tim. v. 1, strange to say, is quoted as proving that Timothy was authorised to administer rebuke to bishops; whereas, even if the passage refer to bishops at all, he is expressly bidden not to rebuke them.

With regard to the work of these two evangelists, it is to be noticed—(*a*) That they were sent, the one to Ephesus and the other to Crete, on a special and temporary mission only. This, in the case of Timothy, was to oppose the false teaching of those speakers of perverse things whom Paul had foreseen would, after his departure, arise in the Ephesian church. In the case of Titus, it was to give to the new converts whom Paul had recently gathered in Crete further instruction respecting the conduct becoming Christians, and to provide for the preservation and continuance of the good work already wrought in that island. What Paul had done for the churches in Asia, but had, from some cause unknown to us, been unable to do for Crete, this Titus is left behind to arrange: he is to "appoint elders in each city," that is, wherever any company of believers were gathered together. And

(*b*) That neither the giving of counsel nor even the administering of rebuke implies the exercise of an official authority. There is a wide and manifest difference between

[1] Called in 1 Tim. iii. 5 the house, *i.e.* household, of God. Compare the house of Onesiphorus, 2 Tim. iv. 19; the house of Stephanas, 1 Cor. xvi. 15.

the two things. To convey a message of admonition (1 Tim. i. 3), to put a brother in remembrance (1 Tim. iv. 6), to communicate what one has learnt of the truth (2 Tim. ii. 2), are not the special functions of an official. They are duties common to all; every Christian, in the measure of his ability, is bound to fulfil them. The power to do so is that of moral suasion, and arises from the personal character of the speaker, and the authority of the truth he utters. The same applies to the investigation of charges brought against an elder; the full confidence of the parties concerned is all that is implied, not official position. Such confidence would necessarily be given to one who came as the friend and companion of an apostle, and sent by him to communicate instruction from him on various points of faith and practice.

The "angels" of the "seven churches which are in Asia" have also been adduced by some as seven instances of an order of ministry superior to that of the presbyter-bishop. But imagery used in so highly symbolical a book as the Apocalypse is very untrustworthy evidence for matters of fact; and even if it were quite certain that the "angel" of each of these churches was its presiding minister, this would be no proof that the office he held was different from any that we have previously met with in the historical passages of the New Testament.

8. In concluding this part of our subject, we notice —First, the absence of any rigid uniformity in the apostolic organisation of the churches. We read of the same church in various stages, and of contemporary churches in different stages. We have the simplest possible type of organisation, and we have a more complex organisation of various degrees. The apostles do not commence with a matured form in accordance with which they frame each church as it was gathered. Organisation is not so much imposed on the

churches as left to grow naturally out of their necessities. In this we may recognise a mark of the divine wisdom bestowed upon the apostles. Their procedure in this is in harmony with God's own method. With Him the life is more than meat, and the body more than raiment. Organs, forms, relations are determined by the circumstances of life, do not determine them. His institutions are subservient to the wants of His creature, do not create them. "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." It is man's way, not God's, to aim at "acts of uniformity." It is our proneness to walk, not by faith, but by sight, that leads us to think more of the form than of the spirit. It is our short-sightedness that trembles at the decay or destruction of the shell as if it must needs involve the decay or destruction of the life it enshrines, forgetting that the Great Teacher has said, "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit."

Secondly, the data furnished in the Scriptures are clearly insufficient for the construction of a model form of church organisation. Not only is there no sign that the apostles themselves had devised a form, according to which they would mould each separate society; but, as if they had, of set purpose, endeavoured to guard future times from finding an absolute model in their administration, the notices they have left on record are of the briefest kind. They have given the barest outlines of their proceedings. We have one office mentioned, the general character of whose functions can be determined with a fair measure of certainty; we have another named, but nothing said about its functions. No rule is given respecting the creation of other offices: no law forbidding it. The outline which the apostles have left us admits of being filled up in an almost endless variety of ways. There might be an exact conformity with apostolic practice in each of two churches

which, notwithstanding, presented manifold differences in the forms of their internal regulations. An open door is thus left for diversities of organisation, and no one church is entitled to claim the title "apostolic" as its peculiar possession.

IV

The apostolic organisation of the churches, however, though not intended to supply us with an authoritative model-form is, nevertheless, of the highest value for the principles it embodies and the example it has set. From the manner in which, as wise master-builders, they laid the foundations, we may learn how we should build thereon.

1. And foremost amongst the instructive features of their example, is the marked respect and deference paid invariably by them to the ecclesia, the assembly of the brethren.

At the very first meeting of the church, this keynote of the apostolic administration is given in the clearest and most emphatic manner, when, in the important step of the election of a successor to Judas, the choice of the two names to be submitted to the lot is freely intrusted to the entire company. If at any time the apostles might, with propriety, have exercised an exceptional prerogative, it would be at this early period of weakness and immaturity. We should have felt no surprise if, in this the infant state of the church, the apostles had acted as *in loco parentis*, and had done on its behalf what, in ordinary times, it would have been left to do for itself. Their doing so would have been challenged by none, and the appointment they made or recommended would have been readily accepted. The more expressive, therefore, is their abstinence, and the more distinctly marked is their recognition of the rights of the Christian brotherhood.

Still more significant, if possible, is the conduct of the apostles at the election of the Seven. It was the first occasion of any discord in the Christian family, and might therefore seem to furnish a just occasion for the assertion of a special authority; yet they act simply as advisers of the brethren. The propriety of adopting some measure to meet the necessities of the case is submitted to their approval; the election of those who were to carry out their wishes is committed to them unconditionally; and the assurance is given them beforehand, that whomsoever they may choose, these the apostles will without question institute.

When intelligence is brought to the church at Jerusalem that the Gentiles had received the word of God, and Peter's action in holding Christian fellowship with Cornelius is challenged by some of its members, the criticism is not resented either by Peter or by his fellow-apostles. To call in question the action of an apostle is not treated as an act of rebellion against constituted authority. The brethren are not told that it is no business of theirs. On the contrary, their interest in the matter is acknowledged without demur. As one amongst them, Peter gives an account of what had happened in the house of Simon at Joppa, and in that of Cornelius at Cæsarea; and his conduct is cleared by the proof so distinctly given, that the admission of Cornelius into the Christian brotherhood was the act, not of Peter, but of God; for before any outward baptism by water, he received, without human intervention, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, even as they themselves had at the beginning.

2. The policy, if one may so term it, pursued in these several instances, is maintained throughout the entire course of the apostolic history. The great bulk of their teaching is given to the churches directly and not mediately. Alike of the doctrines which they unfold, of the inspired precepts

which they enforce, and of the acts of discipline which they either recommend or command, is it true that they are expressly addressed to the brethren who are associated in Christian fellowship. It is to the church of the Thessalonians, to the church which is at Corinth, to all that are in Rome called to be saints, to the churches of Galatia, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colossæ, to the saints which are at Ephesus . . . that Paul addresses nine out of his thirteen Epistles. It is to the sojourners of the Dispersion, and not to any chief men amongst them, that Peter sends his apostolic instructions; to these also that James, "servant of the Lord Jesus Christ," addresses his weighty exhortations. And it is to the "little children," "young men," and "fathers," that the beloved and loving apostle writes his last words of love and warning.

3. It is in just accord with this, and is, in itself, a significant fact, that in these Epistles the references to church-officers are so occasional and so slight. In the apostles' conception of a church, it is never its ministers who stand in the forefront, shutting out of view the company of the brethren, but, contrariwise, the ministers are in the background, the brethren in the front of the picture. In the Epistle to the Philippians the bishops and deacons are, as we have seen, associated with the saints in the address; but it is so done in this Epistle alone. In 1 Thess. none are mentioned, though the presence in that church of some of the former class is to be inferred from the exhortation, "to know them that labour among you, and are over you in the Lord." In the Epistle to the Colossians allusion is made to the "ministry of Archippus," but what that ministry or service was is unknown by us—it may have been simply some service rendered to the saints by a visit of benevolence; but even if it were that he was then holding

office in the church at Colossæ, the passage would be still more expressive, since the church is directed to admonish him, and not he the church. In Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, and 2 Thessalonians, no references to officers in the churches addressed, direct or indirect, are to be found.[1] This silence does not, of course, warrant the inference that no bishops or deacons existed in these several churches, for, in the case of Ephesus, we know that it was otherwise; but it does show how clearly in the mind of the apostle, and in the mind of the Spirit by whom he was guided, the essential idea was that of the ecclesia of saints and faithful brethren; it shows how thoroughly all the members of the church were recognised as having a personal responsibility in the well-being of the whole; and how far it was from being the case that the clergy were the representatives of the church, still less that they constituted it. Though rulers of the church whose ministers they were, they are not treated as distinct from it, but as members of it, as some among the brethren using their particular gifts for the good of the whole, just as others used theirs, and therefore presenting no imperative reason for being singled out from the rest for special notice.

4. One further point in the apostolic example claims to be emphasised, namely, that the duty of maintaining the purity of a church is not exclusively laid upon its pastors and rulers. It is devolved with all the force of apostolic authority as a responsibility in which all its members share. It is the Corinthian Christians, not certain officers of the church, who are charged to "put away the wicked man from among" themselves, and to "be not unequally yoked with unbelievers." It is the Thessalonian

[1] Gal. vi. 6 is no exception. The right of a teacher to pecuniary support, quite apart from any official relation, is implied in 1 Cor. ix. 4–14.

church, not the men who "were over" them, who are bidden to "admonish the disorderly," to "withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly," and to "have no company" with anyone who disobeyed the apostolic word. It is the Hebrew Christians, not those "who rule over" them, who are charged to look "carefully, lest there be any man that falleth short of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble" them.

5. What, then, we may here conveniently ask ourselves, was the relation, as set forth in their own acts and words, of the apostles to the churches gathered by them? We have seen how carefully they abstain from the assertion of personal or official authority in matters pertaining to the internal arrangements of the churches; and throughout their history they never appear as sustaining the position of a supreme ruler over any one of them. In so acting they are acting in accord with all that has gone before, and with the honoured title they bear. Above all else they are Christ's messengers, sent to announce a message of unspeakable preciousness. As at their first appointment they were "sent forth to preach the kingdom of God," and, in obedience to the Master's word, "went throughout the villages preaching the gospel and healing everywhere"; so now, with the Saviour's last words still sounding in their ears and bidding them "go unto all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation," they do not fail to recognise that their supreme function is to make known, as widely as may be, the words and the work of the Great Redeemer. They are the Lord's evangelists, intrusted with His evangel, commissioned by Him to announce it, and, for the discharge of their mission, clothed by Him with power from on high.

How they regarded their apostolic commission, and what in their view was an essential qualification for it, is distinctly set forth in the words of Peter: "Of the men, there-

fore, which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us . . . must one become a witness with us of His resurrection." The special function of an apostle is here expressly described; the occasion required that it should be. He was to bear witness of what Christ had said and done, and emphatically of that which was the crowning fact of the Saviour's ministry and the confirmation of the whole, His resurrection from the dead. With equal distinctness is the same declared in the words addressed to Paul on the journey to Damascus: "To this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness, both of the things wherein thou hast seen Me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee." It is reaffirmed in the words of Ananias: "The God of our fathers hath appointed thee, to know His will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice from His mouth. For thou shalt be a witness for Him unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard." And the apostle himself, in proof that he possessed the qualification needed for the office, twice appeals to the Lord's appearance to him: "last of all, as unto one born out of due time, He appeared unto me also." "Am I not an apostle? have I not seen Jesus our Lord?"

Such, then, was their work, and such its qualification. They were, if one may so say, the living depositaries of the gospel of Christ. Others of their contemporaries might be able to bear testimony to the same facts, and according to their gift expound the same truths, but with the apostles it was a business to do it; they were "set" to this work, appointed to it by the Lord Himself, and specially qualified for it. And this work they fulfilled, not only to the men of their own day, but to the men of all time. What the apostles themselves were to the first churches, their written testimony is to us. In so far as they were

the ministers, the servants, of Jesus Christ, doing His will and proclaiming His message, all true believers are their successors, but in that which distinguished them from other disciples they can have none. Their apostleship they could not transfer to another; they had neither the authority to do it, nor the power to confer the qualification needed for it. In the proper sense of the term, the New Testament Scriptures are the only successors of the apostles.[1]

V

1. We gather, then, from all that has gone before, that, according to New Testament teaching, the organisation of the churches of Christ has been committed as a solemn trust to the honour and fidelity of His servants, and that a large measure of liberty has been left to them in this department of their service. The apostles themselves pursued no uniform method. They nowhere lay upon us an authoritative precept to act in this matter precisely as they did. They nowhere forbid any addition to their plans, or any departure from them. We are, it is true, forbidden to forsake the assembling of ourselves together" (Heb. x. 25); but for this we have, as already seen, a higher law than even that of an apostle, the law of love, the all-controlling love of Christ. The apostolic example is, indeed, full of instruction in the spirit they manifest, and in the general principles which governed their conduct. Even the details of their procedure demand our reverent consideration, and are presumably the wisest and best for us to adopt under

[1] It is worthy of notice in this connection, that in his Gospel and Epistles the Apostle John never once uses the term "apostle" either of himself or any other of the Twelve, but completely identifies himself and them with the general company of his Lord's followers, by giving them no other title than that borne in common by all, namely, "disciples." If he has occasion to individualise a fellow-apostle, he speaks of him simply as "one of the Twelve."

circumstances similar to theirs. But alike by their speech and by their silence, by what they do and by what they refrain from doing, they make it plain that it was not their intent to lay these upon us as laws of the kingdom. They in no way fetter our Christian liberty, they put no restraint upon our freedom of action in obeying the impulses of the Holy Spirit, or in using as best we may the opportunities which God's providence may open before us in the changing circumstances of human history. Thus much at least we may learn from their example, that varieties in church organisation are not an evil to be deprecated, are not even necessarily a defect to be remedied. As in their days some churches had less of organisation and others more, so may it rightly be now. As with them organisation was variable in its forms and its extent, modified by the varying conditions of social or public life, so may it be now. Organisation is but a means to an end, and should foster, and never check, the full expression of the spiritual life of a church. As that grows, so must it grow; ordinarily by slow and gradual changes, since such will ordinarily be the growth of the life. But not so always. Whenever the windows of heaven are opened wide, and a more abundant blessing is poured down upon a church, so that it rises to a higher perception of duty, to a more intense response to the Saviour's love, and a larger sympathy in the travail of the Saviour's soul,—then, like the bursting of the buds under the warm breath of spring, there may be a sharp breach of continuity, and the arrangements of the past be cast aside as no longer suited to the needs of the present. In a word, the organisation of a church must be subordinated to the well-being of the church. The spiritual life which the Head of the church has through His Spirit enkindled, must be sacredly cherished as a "gift from the Lord," and His servants must watchfully see to it that by no self-imposed restrictions they hinder the adoption of

any measure that may be found to contribute thereto.[1] The liberty of action which He has allowed to us, is also itself a gift in whose faithful use we are both honoured and blest. To shrink from the responsibility it involves, or to sanction arrangements which prevent its rightful exercise, is a traitorous act, more traitorous than his who mutilates his limbs to escape the service of his country. In this we have been "called for freedom," and may not entangle ourselves again in any "yoke of bondage." Loyalty to Christ demands of every church that in all its arrangements it maintain its full freedom to adopt whatever may promote the healthier and more efficient discharge of the primary functions for which its fellowship has been formed. Whatever will conduce to the fuller and more reverent expression of its faith and love in the worship it renders to God; whatever may help to a more intelligent apprehension of the meaning and extent of the redeeming work of Christ, or to a fuller experience of the operations of the Holy Spirit, and so to the utterance of a more powerful and more winsome testimony; whatever may promote the readier exercise of Christian activity in the new fields, which a quickened perception may recognise as white already unto the harvest,—these, be they what they may, a faithful church will keep itself free to adopt, even though they demand that some things very helpful in the past should now vanish away. Against this freedom, organisation need not militate. Organisation is not of necessity antagonistic to liberty. If the latter be viewed under its positive rather than its negative aspects, as the power to do rather than the mere absence of restraint, organisation may be its minister and not its foe. A solitary in the desert may be free from the restraint which social and political organisations involve, and nevertheless be as effectually deprived of power to accomplish his wishes as a culprit in

[1] See Notes A and B, pp. 270, 271.

the stocks or a prisoner in his cell. Organisation, therefore, may even be essential to freedom; and when this is the case it is not allowable merely, it is obligatory.

2. Are there, then, no limits to this freedom, no rules to guide and control its exercise? To this it might suffice to reply, that here, as elsewhere, loyalty to Christ must be the supreme law. His appeal in granting us this freedom is to our loyalty to Him, and our response is to be given in the faithful and prayerful and constant endeavour to learn what it is He would have us to do. All that we need for our guidance is really summed up in this. There are, however, some general principles involved in the new life which Christ has given us, and permeating the teachings of the New Testament, which mark out for us certain bounds beyond which we may not transgress; and with a brief exposition of these, this essay will conclude.

(*a*) First and foremost: no Christian man, and therefore no Christian church, may allow any human mediator to come between the soul and God.

In the kingdom of Christ the peculiar offices and privileges described by the word "priestly" are conferred, not upon some, but upon all. Under former dispensations and in other religions a priestly order is a predominant feature. Intercourse between man and God is not direct and personal, but indirect and mediate. The priest is the channel of communication between the creature and the Creator. It is through him that the worshipper offers his homage to the Supreme, and by him that blessings are conveyed from the Great Giver to the objects of His bounty. From the bondage of this earthly mediation the Christian is freed. He comes himself to the throne of grace, and himself enters as a priest into the holy place by "a new and living way." Everywhere and always can he himself offer acceptable sacrifice through Jesus Christ. "There is one Mediator between God and men, Christ

Jesus." The official priesthood being thus abolished, a Christian church is in the highest sense a brotherhood. It is not a community composed partly of privileged and partly of dependent classes. All sustain the same high relation to the Heavenly Father, and, by thus bringing us near to God, Christianity has brought us nearer to one another. It has removed the great gulf that separated man from man, when to one there was free access to the throne of God, and against the other the door of the heavenly temple was firmly barred. How far off from himself, and more painful still, how unreachably above himself, must the ordinary worshipper have felt the priest to be; and how little able was the priest from his exalted station to enter into the troubles and cares of those around him. In but a scanty measure was he "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." In gathering us all around our Father's throne, Christ has taken away this root of bitterness out of the family of the Lord, and through the fulness of His grace has joined the hearts of His children in a newer, closer bond, so that, according to His prayer, "they may all be one, even as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee." In the emphatic words of Scripture, Christ has "made us to be priests unto God," "a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices," and has given us "boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus," to "offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually." A boon so blessed the Christian man may never forego. Between himself and the Heavenly Presence he may not suffer another to come, nor may he dare to interpose the darkness and chill of his own presumptuous mediation between a brother's soul and the beamings of His Saviour's love. Over the portals of every church must be written large and clear, "No Priest but Christ."

(*b*) Secondly, for the Christian man, and therefore for every Christian church, the supreme appeal is to the

word of God as made known to us in the Holy Scriptures.

Amongst the unclean things which God forbids His servants to touch, and separation from which is the condition of His approval and presence, is the recognition of any authority as co-ordinate with, or superior to, His own. The claim to such authority is denounced as the spirit of the antichrist who opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God, setting himself forth as God: and against submission to it the Christian is solemnly warned, lest he "receive of her plagues." To us the Bible is the divinely attested record of the revelation of Himself which God has made through prophets and apostles. The assurance of this comes, with an ever-increasing strength, from what we have felt and handled of this word of life. It is through it that we have "heard the gospel of our salvation," have been "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise," have been "strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man," and have been brought "to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." And it stands alone in this high place; we know of none like it; and we need none other, for its fulness has never been exhausted. Its authority over us is and must be supreme, since through it the eyes of our understanding have been enlightened to know what is excellent. All teaching, all rules and methods of action, must be tested by it, and can only have authority over our conscience and our life as they are based upon it. Whatever the excellence attaching to any merely human authority, and whatever the respect to which on many accounts it may be entitled, if it claim for itself any jurisdiction over the churches of Christ, any authority over their members to bind or loose, it is usurping the throne of God, and must be cast out as an unholy thing.

(*c*) Thirdly, the Christian man may not devolve upon

another his personal obligation to study the divine word, or invest any human teacher with authority to determine for him the will of God.

The one authoritative interpreter is the Holy Spirit, whom the Saviour, according to His promise, sends to guide us into "all the truth." It is He who takes of Christ's and declares it unto us, who teaches us all things, and brings to our remembrance all that our Lord has said. None else has been appointed by our Lord to fulfil this office; and nowhere have we been discharged from the duty of learning His will, each one for ourselves. In humble dependence upon the promised helper we are to seek continually to "know the truth." The obligation springs from our personal relation to Christ, and is constant and paramount. Another, under the teaching of the Spirit, may have learnt some lessons to which I have not as yet attained, have seen some larger meaning in the words of Christ than I as yet have apprehended, or been vouchsafed some clearer vision of God's spiritual operations than any I have as yet beheld;—the revelations made to him can be no revelation to me until I, too, have learnt through the same Spirit to hear in them the Father's voice, and to see that they are in very deed new light breaking forth from the holy word.

This, I take it, is the real meaning of the famous sentence—"The Bible and the Bible only the religion of Protestants." It is not a blind worship of a book. It is not a perverse obliviousness to the revelation God is ever making in the creation He sustains and in the government He exercises. Still less is it the denial or disregard of the presence and operation of the Holy Spirit. It is, in summary phrase, the assertion of our individual responsibility to the revelation God has given us of our personal obligation to learn and obey His truth. Instead of a slavish bondage to the letter, and a worship of the outer garb of truth, it is the earnest recognition of the essential

difference between the letter and the spirit, and the confession that the truth which is revealed is far higher than the medium through which it is revealed. For the truth is ever spiritually discerned, and only as we diligently cultivate the powers of the soul, and in answer to our humble prayers and earnest strivings receive the teaching of the Spirit, can we enter into its presence and learn to "know the truth."

This responsibility is enforced by all we have found the "word" to be through the experience of the past. It is the gospel of our salvation; it is for us to know it that we may rejoice in the glad tidings it brings. It is the charter of our privileges; it is for us to be familiar with it, that we may stand fast in the freedom it confers. It is the guide of our life; it is for us to study it, that we may walk in the way it reveals. And it is the commission of our office; it is for us to examine it, that we may work the work it gives us to do. The words in which another, however holy or wise, may express his apprehension of the truth of God, may never take the place of our own earnest study of our Father's will. It becomes an act of idolatry if we yield to them any authority in the temple of God, and an act of treason if we impose them as authorities on the consciences of others.

In the loyal observance of these principles must every system of church organisation be framed. They may be briefly summarised as, Christ the only Priest, the Bible the only law-book, the Holy Spirit the only authoritative interpreter. They are, as will be seen, in direct antagonism to the evils which at various times have caused discord amongst the churches of Christ. The first condemns the introduction of a priestly class: the second repudiates the supremacy of the State: and the third rejects the assumptions of the papacy. Those post-apostolic developments which have culminated in the Roman usurpations have either sprung directly from the violation of these principles, or

derived their power for mischief mainly therefrom. The root, however, of all the evil is to be traced to the violation of that one rule which has been placed the first. It was this which dragged the rest in its train, and enlarged and intensified the mischief which followed each separate violation of the "law of the house."

(*d*) One other principle, clearly involved in what has been already stated, yet for obvious reasons calling for especial mention, is this. No Christian church may deprive itself of the power of ready co-operation with other churches, in the service of their common Lord and King. The same law which forbids a Christian man to cripple his own power of service, forbids, with equal emphasis, a Christian church to create for itself any inability for any service to which its Lord may call it. Whenever, in the providence of God, the opportunity is given for a larger work than a single church can efficiently accomplish, and when the concurrence and aid of one or more other churches is imperatively demanded, then loyalty requires that such co-operation be, on the one hand, unhesitatingly asked, and, on the other, be cheerfully and generously given. Both reason and experience teach that such opportunities may be confidently anticipated, and no artificial barriers ought therefore to be erected in any church which would hinder it, either in asking or in receiving the assistance of another. Should any such barrier, unhappily, exist, the call of the Master must override all inferior considerations, the barrier must unhesitatingly be overturned, and the way be left open wide for the needed fellowship in service. His sheep hear His voice, and they follow Him.

Let the spirit of the apostolic example be faithfully followed, and the general principles enunciated above be loyally observed, in the organisation of the churches, and we make straight paths for our feet. We can advance with a firm step whithersoever the providence of God may direct. Distinguishing between the permanent and the

transitory, the essence and the accident, we can feel the fullest freedom to alter or enlarge the arrangements of the past. We escape from the reproach and the weakness of a timid and tenacious clinging to the very pattern of the tabernacle which our fathers have shown to us; and can venture to remove the parts which have become unsightly or useless. The additions which will give it both beauty and strength can be wisely framed, the waste places be built up, and "the desolations of many generations" be repaired.

May the Great Head of the Church give His servants wisdom and grace thus to work His will, that through His blessing "the little one may become a thousand and the small one a strong nation"; our beloved Zion be "no more termed Forsaken" nor our land "Desolate"; that "the sons of them that afflicted" her may "come bending unto" her, and "they that despised" her "bow themselves down at the soles" of her feet and call her "The city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel."

NOTE A

To one who reverently studies the operations of the life-giving Spirit, it is sufficiently manifest that the church life must needs be of many types. The life which He imparts and sustains is not in each case the same in degree, or the same in its manifestations. It is not a life which is instantaneous in its unfolding, or which is limited in its growth. And it is as true of man religiously as it is of him physically, that no one is the exact counterpart of another, but that each one has his personal characteristics and his distinguishing features. Hence our church life, the life of associated Christian men, must necessarily be diverse, according to the degree of spiritual life possessed by the associated members, and according also to the special type of that life which may predominate amongst them. And, as a matter of fact, such diversities of church life have ever

existed. Similarities of spiritual tastes, the common sense of special and urgent needs, the pressure of like perils or temptations, the longing after the realisation of the same ideal, the concurrent recognition of a call to some new Christian enterprise, have in all ages drawn men together by the strong attraction of spiritual resemblances,—the like unto its like,—and so given distinctive and varied features to their religious associations. . . . And such diversities will ever be. They are at once the result and the evidence of the present operation of the Spirit of life upon the hearts of men. In the degree in which that life pervades the churches, these diversities are the more manifold and the more manifest. They only cease to show themselves when that life declines. They only cease to be when that life departs.—*Christian Union*, by Samuel Newth, M.A., D.D., pp. 26, 27.

NOTE B

Though the life of a church is something greater and more precious than its polity, polity nevertheless sustains an important relation to the life; just as food and clothing are necessary for the sustenance of the body, even though the life is more than meat and the body than raiment. As is the life of a church, so is the organisation most suited to it—the simpler the life, the simpler the organisation it will need; the more complex the life, the more complex the organisation it will demand. According to the special characteristics of a church's life will be the need of special arrangements by which that life may be fulfilled. As the life of a church expands, as it increases in vigour, as it acquires new faculties and larger sensibilities—so with the capacity to exercise new and larger functions, and to sustain new and wider relations, will it demand an enlarged organisation. Two obvious principles of duty hence arise. It follows, first, that we may not force upon any church either a larger organisation than its energies can employ, or one unsuited to its distinctive peculiarities. The law which enjoins a sacred reverence for life should teach us to reverence most of all the life which the Holy Spirit enkindles in the soul, and we may not depress it by the imposition of a burden disproportionate to its strength, or distort it by providing only unsuitable channels for its exercise. With equal distinctness it follows also that we may not withhold from a church the fuller organisation which its growing life may require, or prevent by any artificial restrictions the free

play of its maturer energies. It is wrong to increase organisation when there is no natural need for it; it is equally wrong to restrain it when growing life demands it. Increased organisation is a hindrance, a dead weight, an evil to be shunned if it be uncalled for by any present need; it is a good to be desired when it answers to increased capacity, or to the conscious recognition of a widening sphere of Christian duty.—*Christian Union*, p. 30.

VII

THE NEW CITIZENSHIP

By JOSEPH PARKER

VII

The New Citizenship

In asking whether the Christian Church should be established by the political State, it must be admitted that the inquiry is old; on the other hand, it can easily be shown that to-day this old inquiry is raised under conditions so unforeseen as to invest it with some degree of novelty. Nonconformists rightly suppose that for themselves they settled the question a long time ago; but the world moves, society re-makes itself under completer discipline, and civilisation — daily enriched on every hand — now promptly answers the spur of deeper and subtler motives. It is because of the New Citizenship, the environment being so palpably modern, that the question may be raised, without any reminiscence of old tempers or alienations happily forgotten. The whole Christian Church has grown in many directions as well as the State: education has filled up many a valley, and mutual knowledge, as between both individuals and communions, has made some rough places plain. Happily there is now no suppression of spiritual sympathies and longings which indicate dispositions, and forebode exertions, in the direction of brotherhood and peace. What part, if any, has the Ancient Faith, by which, throughout this paper, I mean the Evangelical Faith, played in all the holy and beneficent evolution?

In the course of this silent evolution, the somewhat ambiguous word "State" has re-defined its range, and

clothed itself with responsibilities certainly not expressed in earlier and rougher definitions. That word was once as a grain of mustard seed; it is now as a great tree. We are face to face with a new state—a new citizenship—a new political and social apparatus. We are not now to look to dictionaries for a complete definition of the variable word "State," but to the facts of our rapidly changing national life. Dictionaries cannot keep pace with daily evolution; they must wait for successive editions, and carefully abstain from confusing prophecy and etymology. In all that is vital in immediate service the real dictionary is made on the streets, and is only mechanised and formulated in the tranquil library.

That we may not be lost in foreign places let us, in the first instance at least, think only of the British State, and directly ask whether that particular State should, under new circumstances, sustain any special and co-operative relation to the religion of Jesus Christ. What is this institution which in Great Britain we call the State? Is it atheistic, non-theistic, agnostic, or what? Is it essential to a perfect State that it should be non-religious? Is the State simply an organised police, a great money-machine, a standing army, a bank protected by a man-of-war? What is the State? May it punish crime but not prevent it? May it handcuff a man but not educate him? What has given England, as a borrower, its great repute among the nations,—its navy or its conscience? Let us look at some of the answers to such questions.

> The State, as self-defined by evolution, does not now confine itself to money-making, it goes so far beyond this as constantly to consider the welfare and progress of the whole people: the State educates its children and, in some rough, but

> slowly-improving, way, it houses its helpless poor: the State has immensely advanced upon the policy of merely punishing its criminals, by endeavouring to reform them: the new State encourages thrift, promotes emigration, subsidises technical education: the State insists that there shall be one law for the rich and the poor, and it openly tolerates religious opinions which at one time it would have officially rebuked and punished. The State now protects women and children, shields the lower animals from wanton cruelty, looks carefully after the public health, and places its consolidated strength at the service of infirmity and helplessness of every degree.

That is the new State, the State of to-day. But is not such beneficence on the part of the State a phase of mere morality? All who truly believe the Ancient Faith will deny that it is, and they will do so because they trace all fundamental morality back to the deepest religiousness. They know nothing of a sufficing morality that does not find its sufficiency in the living and ever-redeeming Christ. Evangelical believers consider that apart from the Person and Priesthood of Christ there is no vital or permanent morality. More than this, if an organised State can be spiritually moral it can have a conscience, and if it can have a conscience it can have a religion, and if it has a living and energetic religion it must in some official and adequate way express and propagate its piety. We must constantly keep in mind the fact that the State is always, consciously or unconsciously, encroaching upon religious ground. This process of encroachment should be watched. The State that would prevent crime as well as punish it must set itself at the very spring and fount of conduct by bringing the strongest considerations to bear upon motive, and motive is the innermost sanctuary of character. At

first the motive may not be the highest, but inasmuch as it is motive of some kind it belongs to a region of life and growth far away from the beaten road of mechanical and sordid politics. What, indeed, is this but religion? Those who have adopted the Ancient Faith cannot allow appeals to motive and conscience to be regarded as secular, for by their very nature such appeals are spiritual and fundamental. When the State touches constructive character it becomes religious. The State cannot construct individual character without ultimately constructing organised character, and organised character is the State at its best. The State may thus unconsciously be transforming itself into a church. The evangelical believer finds religion in unexpected places, not in some fanciful way, but in a way substantial and obvious. He will contend, for example, that there is not a proposition in arithmetic or geometry that is not religious either in its philosophy or in its uses. Two and two are four is surely not a religious proposition? Yes, it is distinctly religious! In itself it may be only an assumption, but being accepted it henceforth becomes a law which no man may alter; it is a partial definition of righteousness; it is the corner-stone of commerce; it is so sacred and so important that the man who trifles with the canon loses his character and is put away as a thief. Two and two are four has come to be a deeply religious proposition. Without it, or something equivalent to it, civilisation would be impossible. It is a creed; a dogma; a religion. No private judgment is allowed in such a case. The freethinker abandons his miscalled freedom when he worships at this venerable arithmetical altar,—he is the bond-slave of a dogma! The freethinker may dispute the proposition, but he must not act upon his faith, or he will be put in prison until he becomes orthodox or harmless. A very melancholy aspect of the situation is that the freethinker himself was not consulted in the matter! He

was, with no consent of his own, born into a world which accepted the narrow and legal dogma that two and two are four. My immediate point in this connection is that a proposition which in abstraction is purely intellectual becomes in practice sensitively moral, and consequently that the State whilst intending to be strictly political may as to practical issues be intensely religious.

I

> Ought a State thus enlarged and redefined to elect and support a religious institution, under the name, say, of Church? Is the new State a department of the Church? Is the Church the highest aspect of the new State?

There is an infinite difference between religion and theology. Forgetting this, we have been plunged into many a wordy controversy. Theology is academic, scientific, formal, credal, clerical, — it is, indeed, a kind of manufacture; a form manipulated by experts and guarded by ordained stipendiaries. There is no salvation by theology, otherwise salvation would be by science and intellect and culture. On the other hand, religion may be unformulated, unwritten, spiritual, a thrilling and uplifting influence in the heart and life of the simplest believer,—a great faith, an ennobling inspiration, a regenerated and faithful conscience,—a two-commandment Law, lofty as "God," social as "neighbour." Can the State, even the State of modern evolution, be eclectically theological? No. Can the State be religious? Yes. Why cannot the State be eclectically theological? Because there may be a dozen contradictory theological dogmas, and the right or wrong of them is not to be

settled by voting, especially by the voting of men who themselves may know nothing of any theology, and whose concern may be as limited as their knowledge. The absurdity of such voting must surely be seen by all. What member of Parliament would bring in a Bill for the codification of Modern Empirical Philosophies of Religion? Or a Bill to terminate the controversies which have been occasioned by the Ignatian Literature! How, then, can the State elect an Orthodoxy, or choose one from a dozen competitors? Obviously it cannot do anything of the kind. But it has done the very thing which we have declared it impossible to do. The English State has adopted an English Church! This many-headed State, this money-borrowing, ship-building, blood-shedding, aggressive, and belligerent State has picked out a Theology and stamped it with the Queen's head. But when did it do this? Precisely. That is the vital question. This selection was made centuries before the people were educated, centuries before the democracy and its day-school had appeared, centuries before the agricultural labourer had a vote to cast. But it is this very State, bearing so many historical epithets of shame, that has created the democracy, and made the agricultural labourer a man in politics. Certainly, and the State must take the consequences of its own evolution. As it makes men it unmakes slaves. As education comes in, fetters fall off. The bottles and the wine must be readapted. What, then, must be the relation of the totally new State to the religion of Jesus Christ?

My submission is, that whilst the State cannot be theological it may undoubtedly be religious: the State cannot be mechanically ecclesiastical, yet it may in many practical and legitimate ways foster the religious life of the country: the State cannot have a religious creed, but it can express religious sympathy. My nonconformity in

relation to a specific Church by no means implies that I would expect the State to be atheistic; on the contrary, I would labour the more for the evangelisation of the commonwealth, and I would have the State more thoroughly impregnated with a sense of responsibility in relation to all religious activities. I could imagine such a State as we find in England saying in effect—

> I cannot pretend to distinguish between almost innumerable Christian communions: indeed it is no part of my function to prefer one Church to another: I recognise them all; I value them all; I protect them all; I am told by those who most carefully study the national life that Sunday-school teachers are the best policemen, that ministers render the utmost service to the commonwealth, and that religious institutions are amongst the strongest securities of the nation. In what way, if any, can I best show my appreciation of such service and influence?

This is very different to choosing a special Church, endowing a particular Establishment, or endorsing an official Orthodoxy. Evangelical nonconformity will never subordinate the spiritual to the temporal, nor will it propagate itself at the expense of public taxation. But is there not another course open to it? Whilst it consistently declines State patronage, need it prevent the practical expression of State gratitude? In resenting control, is it necessary to repel sympathy? Its watchword has ever been, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." But has Cæsar himself nothing to render? Is Cæsar an atheist? Is Cæsar an outcast? Whose idea is it that organised Society is a mere accident, without vital relation

to the currents of purpose and tendency which we call Providence? Certainly no such idea can be traced to Jesus Christ. In itself it is a vicious and mischievous conception, and should be treated as such by the most strenuous separatists of Church and State. Society, the organised unit, the noun of multitude, cohering through lofty moral considerations, is a divine structure, quite as much as the solar system, and may therefore be a Cæsar which has religious responsibilities. We may not have formed a proper conception of that multitudinous unit which we call the State or Society, therefore it may be timely to look into the nature of that unit as it has been evolved and inspired by new conditions. From that unit we expect education but not religion, honour but not piety, justice but not worship, honesty but not reverence. Is this right on our part? Are we not partitioning morality and religion, and keeping each on its own side of the wall? Are we not sacrificing the largest relations of things to pedantic and clamant prejudices? Can a severer accusation be brought against us than that by a narrow and ill-natured conscience we have manufactured a Cæsar incapable of prayer and independent of God?

But what can Cæsar do? To my mind it is clear that he cannot prefer one Church to another, at least not without an invidiousness that would be fatal to the common sentiment and the common peace. But is it equally clear that Cæsar cannot materially and systematically help certain departments of all Christian service? Is there not a temporal side to church life? There are sites to be bought, estates to be conveyed, buildings to be erected, dilapidations to be renewed, and many other temporalities to be adjusted and sustained. Can Cæsar render no assistance to his most reliable and beneficent supporters? He need not, and must not, interfere with creed, ritual, or

spiritual service; there need be no control over faith, or prayer, or sacrament: Cæsar would not be called upon for charity, but he might be permitted to express official thankfulness. But would not thankfulness imply control? By no means, though it might imply inquiry, consideration, and account. But even in the matter of patronage and control are Nonconformists quite clean-handed? In the very dissidence of dissent do they get quite rid either of control or patronage? Let us see some of the aspects and degrees of State patronage and control clearly marked in the position of Nonconformists:—

> Nonconformists owe their liberties and their rights to Acts of Parliament; their trust-deeds are enrolled in the Court of Chancery; in cases of dispute their trust-deeds are interpreted and determined by Courts of law; their places of worship are licensed and registered by the State; their weddings are watched by the State registrar, and are charged for by him according to a scale fixed by the State; the inlet and outlet of their buildings are settled by State authority; they are so watched by the State that they cannot legally shut out the public during the hours of service; all their collections for purposes not specified in the trust-deed are subject to income-tax; they subject themselves to parochial rates if they sell their own hymn-books on their own premises; they are exempted from parochial and other rates on the ground that their chapels are places of religious worship; their ministers are exempted from service on juries and from service in the army, and thus the State concedes a standing which is denied by the very Church which claims Cæsar as its head, and as the defender of the faith!

In doing all this, Cæsar claims no dominion over the doctrine or ritual of Nonconformist Churches. May he not, therefore, continue and complete his consistency by giving those Churches, under carefully-guarded conditions, and under limitations fixed by the Churches themselves, temporal assistance for distinctively temporal purposes? If not, why not? May he not facilitate the acquisition of building sites? May he not exempt all ecclesiastical and collegiate property from every form of taxation, and permit such property to be used for any remunerative purposes its trustees may approve? If not, why not? May not Cæsar exempt from legacy duty every bequest or endowment given for religious uses? Might he not exempt pastoral salaries from income-tax? Might he not increase every legacy and endowment by a certain scale of increment? Might he not facilitate clerical insurance and other forms of clerical thrift? If not, why not? Cæsar would in this way be encouraging the influences which constantly make for the consolidation and the security of his own empire.

There could be no serious difficulty in working out some such scheme of benefaction, for nearly all Christian communions have their organs or certified mediums of service, such as synods, unions, conferences, assemblies, and local associations, besides which the whole operation would be conducted under the watchful eyes of public criticism. The supreme advantage of such an arrangement would be the satisfaction of a kind of sentiment and conscience by no means difficult to understand. There are people who are shocked at what they would call a churchless State, a godless State, a prayerless State. All this feeling would subside if the State adopted some such policy (always open to modification) as has just been outlined, for instead of having a sectarian State, we should have a State doing all in its power to extend and uphold

the entire religious influence of the country. Under such an arrangement could Parliament be daily opened with prayer? Certainly. Righteously. Most profitably. The Bishop of London, the moderators of the Presbyterian Assemblies, the presidents of the Methodist Conferences, the chairman of the Congregational Union, and the appointed heads of other Christian communions, could be formed into a committee of arrangement, and the happiest results, not in one way only, but in many ways, would follow, to the surprise and satisfaction of the whole Christian Church. I would personally go even further in defining the religious character of the State, for in the House of Commons I would secure seats for three bishops, and for the chairmen of all the Christian communions in the country. Withdrawing the bishops from the House of Lords, considering them no longer lords of the realm, but fathers and pastors of the people, I would place them, with all other ministers, representatively, in the House of Commons. Why not? Parliament is called upon to legislate upon peace, education, temperance, health, thrift, labour, and who could better advise upon such matters than men whose lives are devoted to the highest interests of the people? Thus, in the most practical way, I would avoid the reproach of making an atheistic nation.

In all this line of suggestion my intention has been to draw, not only a broad, but a vital distinction between assistance that is temporal and oversight that is spiritual. Upon that distinction I must repeatedly and firmly insist. The State cannot justly elect any one Church for special privilege and support; in doing so it would at once become a theological partisan, and place itself in a relation of hostility, negative if not positive, towards all other Christian communions. It would create an ecclesiastical orthodoxy, and it would offend a certain common instinct of justice.

The Anglican might fairly say, Why does the State adopt the thorny theology of Presbyterian catechisms, with all their metaphysical definitions, and all their elaborate incoherence of mangled texts? The Presbyterian might retort, Why should a Protestant State adopt a book of ritual and devotion full of rank popery or sacerdotal reservations and priestly tricks? Methodism might say, Why be bound down by prayers that are often little better than pompous addresses to an invisible Shah, and that exclude the liberty and the passion of living and glowing devotion? Others would object to what they would call a theological Act of Parliament; and others again would have strong scruples about adopting or signing any stereotyped form, if on no other ground, certainly on the ground that language itself changes, and thus impairs or forfeits the authority of precision. Congregationalism, for example, has no written creed or formal standard that must be subscribed: it is held together by certain spiritual agreements, but authoritative verbal forms are unknown to it.

If the State arrogated to itself the right to prefer one ecclesiastical form to another, it must take along with that perverted right the right to condemn and persecute all other forms. This, of course, will be denied, but denial is futile. Paradoxical as it may appear, Toleration is itself persecution. We do but vulgarise the term persecution when we think only of fine and imprisonment, and stake and block and exile. Persecution can be cruelly negative. Fashion can inflict the deadliest social contempt without imposing fines or striking blows. How unfashionable must he be who separates himself from the Church of the nation, the shrine of the monarch, the altar of the nobles! How infatuated, how conceited, how dangerously eccentric! Avoid him, stigmatise him, suspect him, laugh at him, but tolerate him! Eighteen centuries ago they would

have crucified him; to-day they tolerate him, and thus increase and prolong his agonies. Of course he will be supported by his conscience; but for such support he is in no degree indebted to the State, which first made him a heretic, and then shunned him as a pedant. By and by, as education extends and civilisation takes a wider and juster view of social relations, the State will come to see that it can only pursue such a policy at the risk of its own disintegration, for no State can with impunity continue to insult its own tax-payers, and sneer at the conscience of its own citizens.

II

How would the State then stand in relation to the question of Conformity and Nonconformity? Would not the same irritation continue? Would not ecclesiastical controversy be embittered?

The State would have no relation either to Conformity or Nonconformity. Nonconformity is much more than simple dissent from the establishment of a particular Church. Many Nonconformists have been believers in such an institution. Nonconformity has been in many quarters more a question of doctrine than of policy. If the National Church were national no longer, there is a sense in which Nonconformity would be as definite as ever. Romanism is not established by law, yet Protestantism encounters it with undiminished vigour. The difference would be that the doctrine opposed by evangelical and Protestant nonconformity would not be promulgated in the name, and, as it were, by the authority of the nation. It would become a creed, for which the nation as such would have no responsibility, and would consequently take its place amongst other creeds, securing for itself whatever

might be due to the intelligence, the zeal, and the influence of its believers. The Anglican and the Presbyterian would simply be nonconformists to each other. Dissent of this kind, enlightened and forbearing, is not to be discouraged, for it may be educative, emulous, and quickening. We need have no fear that by such mutual dissent we should promote the baser sort of individualism. We might, indeed, thus realise and express the larger unity. To belong to each other, to complete each other, to help each other, is the very desire of the heart of Him in whom we find the ideal of God.

The State could be religious without having a privileged Church. In losing an institution, it need not lose a character. It might, indeed, justly claim that it became less ecclesiastical as it became more spiritual, less sectarian as it became more sympathetic. I have contended that the great composite unit that we call the Nation may have an individual character, and I may add that this character is happily not at the mercy of the ill-disposed and ill-mannered persons, who are a disgrace and a weakness to any community. It would be true to speak of England as Christian England, though thousands of its citizens never enter a place of worship. It would be true to speak of England as an honest country, though its jails are sometimes full of thieves, and its courts of bankruptcy are in session all day long. It would be true to speak of England as a healthy country, though hospitals and infirmaries and dispensaries are standing in every shire, and in well-nigh every parish. We thus regard the national unit as a whole. A country has a genius as well as a geography. England may be valorous, though your next-door neighbour may be a coward, and your own son a poltroon. I could therefore by analogy have no difficulty in thinking of England as a sincerely religious country though it should abolish the special privileges of any favoured com-

munion. On the other hand, I could not regard England as necessarily a religious country simply on the ground that it established and endowed any particular Church. A country may buy a reputation, or sop its conscience that it may gratify its lust. An assassin may wear a ring. The character of the State does not depend upon any one institution, how good or bad soever: we must know all the facts before we can form a sound conclusion. As I walk along Newgate Street towards the City, I find on my right hand the notorious jail, where men have been imprisoned and hanged, generation after generation; and on my left hand I find the famous Bluecoat School, where generations of children have been trained: by which institution shall I judge the character of England? So, I argue that the character of the State does not depend on church or chapel, bank or jail, school or factory, but on a certain something affected by them all, yet different from any of them, as climate may be different from weather. And so I return to the doctrine that the State has an entity of its own, or is an entity by itself, and that it is much less a human structure than it sometimes seems to be. I repeat my conviction that Society is a divine idea, a divine organism, a divine instrument, a holy potentiality. Therefore, as the State includes all sorts of elements, all ages and conditions of people, all temperaments and dispositions, all characters and services, it may be in its very heart truly religious, though it may pick out no Church for special privilege and distinction.

I have no difficulty in connecting this whole line of suggestion with the innermost spirit of the Evangelical faith. That faith contemplates the discipling of "nations," and proposes nothing less than the conversion of "every creature." It throws its holy spell upon both the nation and the individual. It will have nothing to do with ethnic divisions, barbarian or Scythian, caste or bigotry, Jew or

Gentile. It insists that God has made of one blood all nations of men, and it rebukes with holy violence the pitiable falsehood that God is a respecter of persons. The Evangelical religion is the religion of universal humanity. It claims the dominion of the heart, making that heart holy and humble and self-sacrificial. It is not an alms-collector, as if alms were a bribe or a price: it so affects the soul as to draw it into the joy and the high rapture of continual gift and service. This is what is meant by "the voluntary principle," the principle of a regenerated, a sanctified, and a consecrated will. To this, and not to State aid, does it look for the propagation of the gospel in all the regions of the world. It will not work either by compulsion or taxation,—it works under the power of the grace of Christ,—under the infinite inspiration of a pathos deep and tender as the love of God. This pathos is the crowning power of the Evangelical faith. It creates missions. It gives to the world a new heroism. No merely intellectual system could do what is done by sanctified pathos. Philosophy need not be philanthropic. Science need not make personal sacrifices. Even Poetry need not at any inconvenience go beyond her own flowering and fragrant paradises. But the love of Christ must preach the gospel to every creature, and capture for Jesus every people and tongue: storm and tempest cannot deter it; fever and plague cannot quench its passion; it hath its way in the whirlwind, and it discovers "a path which the vulture's eye hath not seen." It neither fears the frown nor courts the patronage of Cæsar. All other kings are as a vapour beside the King of kings. All other necessities are frivolous compared with the need of the New Birth and the New Name. That divinest love must finally conquer, for its resources are infinite, and its patience cannot be outworn. Then why should it seek the patronage of the State? It never does. Why should it eke out by taxation what is left undone by sympathy? It

never does. Then why suggest that the State may help the common work of the whole company of the churches? Precisely for the reasons stated, and under the limitations so guardedly defined. The State is not an invention of atheism. Corporate man is the work of the beneficent Creator. As already submitted, Cæsar himself is a unit with a conscience, an entity with moral responsibilities. But even if Cæsar could be penetrated by the love of Christ, one result of the penetration would be, not the election of a privileged communion, but a grateful and impartial appreciation of the purpose and service of the entire Christian Church. Never, at the risk of being tedious, forget what may be called the personality even of Cæsar: we speak of the national conscience, the national health, the national credit, the national honour, why not of the national religion, not as a sect, but as a sentiment and a responsibility?

The doctrine that "the State has to do with politics only," may be an aphorism which has gathered a kind of authority from the fact that its conciseness may have obscured its sophistry. What is the proper scope even of politics? Who has any revelation upon this inquiry? Has God told any man that politics must be restricted to the protection of life and property, the lust of territory, and the extension of commerce? Admitting that something of the kind may have been the rough limit of politics in the elementary condition of society, is no account to be taken of social evolution? A better citizen means a better citizenship. Increasing liberty means increasing responsibility. We must not therefore allow the term "State" to remain as a rudimentary term, ignoring the facts of evolution. The State that has improved its prisons must have improved its conduct. The State that teaches little children to read may be awakening to new responsibilities. The State that is pushing out its franchises in all directions

may have become possessed with a new sense and a new appreciation of manhood. So I come back to my first position and demand, if the argument is to be complete, that the term "State" must be taken in all its latest significance. That significance would show the agricultural labourer in quite a new light. A hundred years ago the position of the agricultural labourer was far enough from being what it is to-day. His description, therefore, must be re-defined. The field labourer has his parliamentary vote, his parish council vote, his village library, and twenty things, all of significant value, which his brother labourer never dreamed of half a century ago. "Agricultural labourer" once meant a smock-frock, nine shillings a week, and "pastors and masters." All this is changed. How has the change been brought about? Not by a hereditary nobility, not by a feudal Church, not by an exclusive plutocracy. The change has been very largely effected by the Evangelical faith constantly inspiring evangelical missions in which the agricultural labourer has been primarily considered. The agricultural labourer owes himself very largely to Methodism,—evangelising, soul-saving, sensational Methodism. The agricultural labourer, as we now find him, is the spiritual child of John Wesley. What is true of the agricultural labourer is true, within proper limitations, of the whole State. The State owes itself, in all its larger patriotism, to services which it has never been asked to subsidise,—to services which, in its barbarous and priest-ridden days, it persecuted and denounced and banned. Being now a new State, what does it owe by way of simple gratitude to the religion that has saved it? Patronage and control that religion will never accept; but it insists that the favoured communion shall be made to rank with other communions, and that then the State may consider in what form it will express its gratitude to the Churches which have given it stability and

reputation, those Churches reserving their indefeasible right to determine whether, or on what terms, they can accept the help of a State they have done so much to develop and enrich.

Socialism, altruism, collectivism, communism, are names that may at least represent mischievous influences. I cannot, therefore, accept them without careful definition. They are terms that may be full of sophistry and deceit, mere cries of pedantry and selfish calculation. The socialism of Christ is universal. That distinguishes it from the altruism of parochial selfishness. Evangelical socialism says: "Preach the gospel to every creature"; "teach all nations"; "God hath made of one blood all nations of men"; "God is no respecter of persons; in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him"; "there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him." "Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us? To us there is but one God . . . and one Lord Jesus Christ." If that is socialism, I am in favour of it—it is world-wide, man-including, international, cosmopolitan, big as the heart of God. But there is another socialism only to be reprobated with indignation. It is the socialism that works for classes and cliques, and unionisms and petty local interests, whatever may become of the rest of the world. We can never be truly patriotic until we are truly cosmopolitan. For true cosmopolitanism we are indebted to the Evangelical faith—the only faith on whose banner may be read "every creature," "all nations," "one blood," "one Father." On that crimson banner we do not read, "England for the English," "No Irish need apply," "Let the Armenians take care of themselves," "No Intervention," "Foreigners not admitted,"—these are written on the black flag of the devil, not on the blood-red banner of Christ.

It has been thought the Evangelical faith had nothing to do with States and policies, and commerce and labour and wages. That is not so. The Evangelical creed penetrates the individual soul, penetrates the life of States, and penetrates the genius of organised civilisation. It is the greatest of creeds—generous as the sun, inflexible as the geometric square, vast and tender as the love of God. This is the true Christian socialism. But there is a socialism that is not Christian. There is a devil's creed that would boycot and starve a man if he did not belong to certain unions, or if he claimed the independence and liberty of a man: a creed that would drive the Chinaman out of California because he can work skilfully and live without wasting his wages; a creed that would drive out the German clerk, the French artisan, the Italian waiter, because they can beat the English on English ground. That is not Evangelical socialism. Evangelical socialism would stir us to noble and generous emulation, saying to each country, "Work so well that no other country can compete with you"; "the palm be his who wins it"; "see that no man take thy crown." The object of Evangelical socialism is to get rid of the word "foreigner." It is a carnal word; it is stained with sin; the brand of Cain is upon it; in every sense, personal, social, political, we are to be "no more strangers and foreigners"; we are to be loving children in our Father's household. Every opposing socialism is organised selfishness, and should only be named in the pulpit of the world-loving Christ to be denounced and repudiated.

The Ancient Faith is, first of all, a religion of individualism. Under its action souls are saved singly—one by one—man by man—each heart regenerated or born again, as if it were the only heart in the world. "Every creature" precedes "all nations." But no sooner

is a soul fully and savingly brought under the power of Christ's grace than it determines to bring other souls under the same blessed dominion. This is the root of true socialism, and, indeed, I doubt whether there is or can be any other root. Outside the Bible, where does the word "neighbour" occur? We are now so familiar with the word that we think we invented it, whereas it is exactly as special and distinctive as the word "God." The two words come together in the two great commandments of the law. Socialism, therefore, in its true sense is an under-theology, —the supremest thought brought down into daily practice, —the Eternal Silence broken up into songs of the house and melodies of kindliest brotherhood. The word "neighbour" is a syllable in the word "God," that word itself, though only a syllable, being the very sky of language, the very fount of all the rivers of speech. In the New Testament there are three words for "neighbour," but two of them occur only once, leaving ὁ πλησίον some twelve uses of its own,—"the one near,—a fellow-man,—any other member of the human family." It was Christ who, both in the Old Testament and the New, made "thy neighbour," not the mere πολίτης, the townsman, but ὁ πλησίον, the near one, the kinsman, the other heart, a word which may express the nearness of Sychar to Jacob's well, or the closer nearness of the Samaritan to the wounded Jew. Thus Christ seeks the individual soul, and the individual soul consequently seeks the other man, makes him his "neighbour," and lavishes on him the new-born and ever-enduring love. It is most important to bear this in mind, lest, forgetting the fount and origin of true neighbourliness, we should be tempted to imagine that a mechanical socialism is more benevolent than the all-redeeming love of God. There are lights which look like human inventions, are announced as such, are patented as such, are publicly sold as such, yet all those little lights are sparkles of a fire

we never kindled; so in morals there are conceptions of right and wrong, theories of social regeneration, and codes of duty and honour, which may owe all their value to the inspiration they deny. Who can tell to what skeleton shapes they would be reduced if they could be made to stand apart from the sustaining and beautifying influences which constitute Christian civilisation, and from the many outlines and forces which give perspective and colour to what would otherwise be an infinite void? We have not sufficiently magnified this consideration in forming our estimate of human progress. I am distinctly in favour of claiming all this outlying property in the name of Christ. Every good thing is His alone. Every battle of right against might is Christ's war; every encroachment of knowledge upon ignorance is Christ's invasion; every search for that which is lost is Christ's quest; every stoop over the bed of pain or death is Christ's own condescension. If, as Christians, we were not first in those holy services, we ought to have been; and if we have been outrun in this sacred race, we must find the reason in our own lack of energy, for it certainly is not to be found in the will or purpose of Christ.

The teacher of the Ancient Faith, if a tactician and a man of apostolic skill, can begin his work at the point of thinking, which has no suspected relation to Christian theology, and thus show many people how they unconsciously touch the highest possible lines of thought. He can show that many of the world's own established philosophies, axioms, and canons of wisdom, find their true correction, their natural expansion, and their divine apocalypse, in the very religion which they are supposed to ignore. He may show that Faith, instead of being a superstition, is the larger Reason. Without opening the Bible he can find innumerable texts, and without the form

of a sermon he can make known the saving gospel. Hence my distinct approval of some methods of popular lecturing, which, at first sight, seem to be not only irregular, but extravagant and undignified. I cannot recall one indisputable axiom in worldly wisdom that does not immediately point to its higher self as developed and completed in Christianity, nor can I find in practical Christianity a single doctrine that does not claim its counterpart in some law of nature, some habit of human thought, some guiding principle in civilised society, showing in how deep a sense it is true that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, that man was made in the image and likeness of God, and that Reason is always carving and inscribing marble slabs in honour of a power unknown, but undeniable. In view of such facts the Christian preacher need not shrink, in public or in private, from taking his texts from the oldest of all Bibles—the Bible of Nature and the Bible of human consciousness and experience. The great doctrine of vicarious suffering would seem to be the mother-doctrine of every sphere of life. If Christians walk by faith and not by sight, so do secularists, so do agnostics, so do atheists. Discovery is, in its own sphere, but another name for revelation in things spiritual. Prayer is but the uppermost meaning of all the heart's dumb yearning. If a large induction of facts has led to the discovery of a law, a still larger induction of still clearer facts has led to the revelation of a Father. The Christian preacher has so much to begin with in the actual life of his hearers! They supply him with his starting-points and with the weapons which he turns upon themselves in the faithful application of his argument. He finds them in quest of pleasure, and in offering them eternal joy he has the support of an instinct which cannot be safely suppressed; he finds them in a multitude of cases providing against fire and flood, famine

and pestilence, and boldly calls upon them to complete their own prudence by providing for the larger time and the deeper need; he finds them planting sweet flowers upon the graves where love lies buried, and he tells them that men may so die as to bloom in heaven's warm summer; and if you ask him, as he changes his base of operation, adapts his methods to new circumstances, begins at all accessible points, why he varies the lines of his ministry, he will answer, "I have made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

In my forecast of the impending century—the twentieth since the summer of Bethlehem—I see clearly that Churches and ministers may have to accept larger definitions of theological and ecclesiastical terms; I see a time, may it come soon, when all terms will be regarded as symbols pointing to truths infinitely greater than themselves. The telescope is not the constellation. I have come to see that it is more important that a man should believe in God, than that he should accept my particular and, perhaps, variable theory of God; and that it is of infinitely greater consequence that he should believe in Immortality, than that he should select some special theory because of its temporary intellectual fascination. The supreme ideas will, by their moral sublimity, keep the man right as to his spirit; the conflicting theories must be determined by life-long prayer and life-long education,—nay, more perhaps than life-long,—for we may have to pursue and complete in eternity what we could but imperfectly begin in the cloudy and troubled light of time. With regard to the Church, it would not surprise me to find, as the result of much ill-spent invention and much abortive effort—so much that the recollection of it would burn us like a furnace, if we

had not learned to match the rapidity of production by the rapidity of forgetfulness,—it would not surprise me, I say, to find that, instead of having to create a Church, we have simply to recognise one. Church-making is no business of ours; when we attempt it, we usurp the Divine prerogative. The outer congregation we may, in some secondary and limited sense, attempt to set in orderly array, but the Church—the inner, spiritual, holy sacrifice—lies beyond the province of our hands. It is not conceivable by me that the material creation can be so much larger than our thought can grasp, and the spiritual creation so much smaller; yet men who have stood in reverential awe before huge masses of matter, and pronounced them incalculable, have stood in the presence of the Church, and reduced it to quotable statistics. The astronomer has forgotten that he himself is a greater mystery than the astronomy which he worships. The meanest child is to me infinitely more unthinkable than are the constellations which hide themselves from the inquiry of science. This would seem to be the evolution through which biblical thought itself has passed. David considered the heavens, the moon, and the stars, and wondered that God should make account of the son of man. Peter, a man in every way likely to be impressed by bulk and force and radiance, having been with Jesus and learned of Him,—having seen the white flame on Tabor, which Saul afterwards saw at the gate of Damascus,—looked upon the infinite pomp, and predicted the noise of its departure and the smoke of its dissolution. Have we spiritually grown in the same direction? If so, we must have cause to know that the Church is as much larger than the churches, as the spirit is larger than the body, and that the universe was made for man, and not man for the universe. Looking in the direction pointed out by this suggestion, I am prepared to believe that many men are in the Divine Church who may not

be in the human congregation, and that the divine recognition of men in the final census will not more surprise the men themselves than shock, with unutterable astonishment, the scribes who were prepared to abridge the labours of Omnipotence by handing in a revised and corrected register of men fit for the kingdom of heaven. The Lord will graciously keep Creation and Judgment in His own hands, for men could never be trusted with absolute Fiat and Doom.

III

All that is vital in these doctrines must be largely indebted to the Christian preacher for exposition and popular acceptance.

To my mind, the divinely qualified Christian preacher is the greatest man in the world. It is easily possible to misrepresent ministers by dismissing them as "theologians," and easily possible for ministers to misrepresent themselves by heedlessly accepting that designation. Before it is accepted it should be clearly defined. It is sometimes accompanied with a smile, which is not the less suggestive that it is friendly. It means, without bitterness, that the minister is a superior kind of woman, too full of Greek and catechism to know much about the ways of the world. He is, at least outwardly, revered so profoundly as to be profoundly ignored upon all practical questions. He is the victim of an idolatry so sentimentally complete as to amount to practical annihilation. There is a sense in which the term "theologian" amounts to apotheosis in the kingdom of shadows, and there is also a sense in which it becomes the highest title that can be sustained by the most illustrious of mankind. I cannot but hold, let me repeat, that the Christian minister, when he realises his full vocation, when adequately equipped and

wholly consecrated, has no superior in all the world: great in intellectual capacity, supreme in spiritual insight, strong in the instinct and in the practice of justice. The Christian minister is not a chatterer of other-world phrases, but a true interpreter of life's mystery and sacrifice. We must get rid of the lie that the minister is a priest,—a kind of celestial broker,—even if, in getting rid of it, the minister has to do something which a narrow judgment may regard as non-ministerial. Ministers do not minister simply because they can do nothing else, but because they consider that by comparison nothing else is worth doing. This was the estimate of values which determined the action of the Apostle Paul. A mind so capacious and energetic could have even glorified any sphere of human activity; yet, gathering together all the privileges of ancestry, all the dignities of office, all the temptations of sense, he burned them all on the altar of the Cross, and counted their sacrifice a gain.

"But let every man take heed how" he preaches. A new citizenship demands a new pulpit; not a new doctrine, but a new method, a living adaptation. Jesus Christ took his texts from what was going on around Him: "when He saw how . . . He said unto His disciples"; "when a certain lawyer stood up tempting Him, . . . He said." The living minister must dwell upon living themes. He should be a man of the people. Christ lived on the highway, in the market-place, in the open air. He did not recite His own compositions, or make a literary display, or give examples of finished rhetoric, or exemplify the mechanical art of homiletics: He "taught," He "talked," He "answered." He was infinitely natural because He was infinitely sincere. He preached of Abraham; He did not preach to him. Christ never addressed the absentees; He looked His audience in the face, and bore straight in upon the heart.

There never were such discourses. They cut men in pieces; they comforted the wounded with healing balm; they made the sea boil, and lulled the raging of the waters; they unmasked and scorched hypocrisy; they cheered, as with light, souls that were struggling in solitary prayer. What great talking was the talking of Christ! He whispered with infinite delicacy. "He cried with a loud voice." I cannot imagine Jesus reading an essay to His hearers. Nor can I imagine Paul doing so. Nor fervent Peter. Talk need not be *jejune*. Conversation need not be gossip. The people gather round a man who has a gospel, and believes it, and wants it to be accepted at once.

The only man who can destroy preaching is the preacher, and in all truthfulness he can most surely destroy it utterly. Let him forget or neglect his central subject, and his own overthrow is certain. The truly consecrated and fervent Christian preacher does not preach to trades, professions, scholastic certificates, or university degrees; these "shoes" are to be "put off" outside the sanctuary, and within that holy place nothing is to be recognised but the sinfulness of the human heart, the universal need of Christ's vicarious sacrifice, and the necessity of being born again by the gracious and mighty energy of God the Holy Ghost. "O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand." It is a question of blood! The blood of murdered men is on the skirts of unfaithful ministers! In vain do we give men new ideas of the universe, new conceptions of spiritual truths, brilliant answers to intellectual objections, and dazz-

ling displays of many-coloured erudition, if we keep back the saving gospel, the humbling Cross, the redeeming blood,—if we let men slumber in their iniquity, if we hide the bottomless pit, if we make light of sin, if we turn the ministry into one of the learned professions,—the blood of murdered men will be required at the watchman's hand. A thrill of horror paralyses the soul as we think of the appalling meaning of the term "damnation": who can measure its darkness, who can express its pain, who can follow the mystery of its agony? but to what infinite significance is the meaning of the term raised when the man who is damned is a nominal minister of Christ,—driven away because of unfaithfulness, banished because he kept back the truth, damned because he murdered the souls of men!

When Paul speaks of "the foolishness of preaching," he is not referring to preaching as an art, or even as a method; he is referring only to the foolishness of the thing preached;—and what is that foolish thing, that contemptible absurdity, that meanest of all symbols? It is the Cross. It pleased God to make a thing so shameful the symbol of a conquest so glorious. It is God's inscrutable way. He used "things that are not,"—things that cannot come into visibleness and measurement,—things that can only be dimly and remotely thought of as transcendently negative—"to bring to nought things that are." It is a holy wonder,—it humbles our vanity,—it quenches our cleverness, and drives us out of ourselves for inspiration and strength. If I have in any degree entitled myself by long service to give advice to the next generation of preachers, I would plead with them to preach from the foot of the Cross. I would beg them to avoid all fanciful topics and all fantastic methods, and to give their whole time and strength to the unfold-

ing of the love of God, as shown in the person and priesthood of Jesus Christ who died for us and rose again. We can best approach even social questions from the Cross. Labour and capital can only be reconciled at the Cross. Family disputes must be settled in the spirit of the Cross. International misunderstandings perish when discussed within the sanctuary of the Cross. My brethren who are on their way to the pulpit need have no fear of being behind "the times," if they look at the whole movement of life from the standpoint of Christ's world-saving Cross. I believe that if preachers would be truly "original," the one thing they have to avoid is novelty. They must get back to divine beginnings, even to the original thought and purpose of God. They must get rid of all superficial and temporary methods of treating the corrupt and pestilent heart, and must therefore work from the Cross,—from One who was slain from before the foundation of the world. The ancient is the truly modern. The eternal in the longrun rules the transient. It will be a day of woe for the Christian pulpit when its hireling occupants play popular tricks to win popular applause. Only one pulpit theme can last, and it lasts because it is none else than the unspeakable love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Let us look at this matter in a living picture: Imagine the gathered hordes of ignorance, misfortune, misery, and shame, having gone the round of all the Unions, Conferences, Assemblies, and Convocations held in the course of the ecclesiastical year: imagine one of the members of that suffering community representing his comrades, and putting their sorrows and their wishes into words, and his speech might take some such turn as this:—"We have had a full year among you, and we cannot very well make out what you are driving at. We do not know most of the long

words you use. You are all well dressed and well fed, and you are D.D.'s and M.A.'s and B.A.'s. We do not know what you are, or what you want to be at. From what we can make out, you seem to know that we poor devils are all going straight down to a place you call hell; there we are to burn for ever and ever, and gnash our teeth in pain that can never end; we are to be choked with brimstone, stung by serpents, laden with chains;—then why don't you stop us on the road? Why don't you stand in front of us, and keep us back from the pit, and the fire, and the worm that cannot die? We read the inky papers which you call your "resolutions," but in them there is no word for us that is likely to do us real good. They say nothing about our real misery; nothing about our long hours, our poor pay, our wretched lodgings. Why don't you pass resolutions about the distiller, the brewer, and the publican? We cannot stagger to our warrens and rookeries, where the chairs are stones, and the beds are straw, and the pictures our own black shadows, without passing the public-house and catching tempting whiffs of the hot drinks that make us worse than beasts. The publican robs us, mocks us, poisons us, and turns us out of doors. Why don't you call him robber and murderer, and drive him out of the land? He takes your pews, sings your hymns, passes your resolutions, presides at your meetings, and throws a crust to the orphan whose father he killed. You call yourselves men of God? What God? Where is He? What does He say? What does He want? When you come amongst us, you come against your will; some of you live upon us almost as much as the publican does, by writing tales about us, making speeches about us, drawing pictures of us in papers and books, getting our secret off us, and then selling it for silver. We have been watching you, and we have formed our opinion of you just as certainly as you have formed your opinion of us. We have seen the

auctioneer knock down the cure of souls to the highest bidder; we have heard the chapel man haggle for higher pay, and boast of the respectability of his pew tenants and the gentility of his neighbourhood; we have heard your backbiting of one another:—open graves, whited sepulchres, impostors all! How can ye escape the damnation of hell!"

It is easy to see how many protests can be urged against this violent speech, and how many pleas could be set up in palliation of its savage judgment; it would be easy to summon a little army of self-denying clergymen, ministers, ladies, philanthropists, teachers, and visitors, who are labouring in the most degraded and repulsive parts of London; it might be possible to discriminate between one publican and another so as to show wide difference of character,—but when every mitigation has been completed and every abatement has been allowed, there is enough left in that fierce charge to compel the sad and compassionate attention of Christian teachers and workers. Its opening sentences struck me as full of painful suggestion. As a matter of fact, we may most unconsciously often use words which many people may not understand,—uncouth words, technical phrases, pulpit idioms, or mediæval barbarities; our style may be too literary, too pompous, too refined; and we may be so partially and perversely educated, as to be more anxious to establish a proposition than to save a soul. An eminent critic has said that in the style of English which the historian Gibbon adopted, it was impossible to tell the truth. The critic meant that Gibbon's style was too majestic and stately to take up and set forth in glittering vividness the petty details, the minute and contemptible particulars and littlenesses, which make up no small part of the life of every aggressive and advancing people. So it may be with

Christian preachers. By the use of stilted phrases, long-dragging polysyllables, and a species of majestic slang that would not be tolerated in Parliament or at the Bar, preachers may easily create wide distance between the pulpit and the pew. Nothing, in my judgment, can meet this difficulty but pureness and earnestness of heart. A Christlike heart will have one object and only one, and that is to *save* men; and in carrying out that object, if either dignity or simplicity must be sacrificed, it will be dignity that must suffer death.

If I might add a word on an immediately related question, it would be to the effect that our evangelism is in danger of devoting its energies almost exclusively to what are known as "the masses." I must protest against this contraction, on the ground that it is as unjust to Christianity as it is blind to the evidence of facts. If the city missionary (he being a highly qualified man) is wanted anywhere, he is specially wanted where business is degraded into gambling, where conscience is lulled by charity which knows nothing of sacrifice, and where political economy is made the scapegoat for oppression and robbery. But to lecture the poor is easier than to accuse the rich. Have we not lost one bold tone out of the music of preaching? Who now dare say, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (Jas. iv. 4); "Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation" (Luke vi. 24); "Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth" (Jas. v. 4). That is a branch of evangelistic service which cannot be neglected with impunity. There is only one class worse than the

class known as "outcast London,"—worse in every feature and in every degree,—and that class is composed of those who "have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton," and who "have nourished their hearts as in a day of slaughter." The "cry" is "bitterer" in many tones at the West End than at the East; the ennui, the love of pleasure, the satiety of appetite, the speculation in marriage, the gambling in politics, the thousand social falsehoods that mimic the airs of Piety and proclaim the protection of Usage,—these seem to be distress without alleviation, and to constitute a heathenism which Christ Himself might view with despair. I am not able to look upon poverty as many do. It is to my mind not an accident, not a symptom, not a problem awaiting political solution, but a mystery in human discipline and redemption, a dark necessity in the completeness of the immediate situation. I cannot but feel that the world would be the poorer but for its poverty, and I feel it the more when I remind myself of the historian's testimony, that when the Romans lost their poverty they began their vices. That the lot of many of the poor can be improved no one disputes; that a charge, an impeachment, tremendous in its justice, can be brought against parochialism, officialism, and the vicious species of landlordism, admits of no question—I am speaking of the greater poverty; the solemn mystery of suffering; that poignant and chastening appeal which, as Christ said, is "always" with us. I am of opinion that every Christian assembly should make a serious question of the Poor Laws of England. The workhouse as at present managed is a disgrace to us. We have no right to huddle all poor people together indiscriminately, as if they belonged to one class, nor should we content ourselves with the rough classification of criminal and non-criminal paupers; the classification should be scrupulously graded, so that every necessitous person could go into the right company with-

out sense of degradation or injustice. The State would spend money wisely in providing neat and cheerful homes, guarded by humane and sympathetic discipline, for the honourable poor, and would thus show that poverty is not of necessity criminal or degrading, but may be compatible with social uprightness and deeply religious feeling. I have nothing to say for the ill-behaved, my one concern is for the virtuous and sensitive poor. But in order to address ourselves to questions of this nature, we must by pureness and Christlikeness of heart rid ourselves of the bitter controversies which are hindering the consolidation of Christian energies. If some controversies and speculations must, by a mysterious necessity of the human mind, ever continue, we ought to find in human charity the balance to intellectual speculation. Where mental excitement is not followed by beneficent activity, the head will develop at the expense of the heart, and the issue will be a pedantry that can only criticise, and a vanity that cannot stoop to see, the Cross. Hard work must balance hard thinking. Transfigurations on the mountain must be followed by miracles of healing at the mountain base. Thus, and thus only, will the whole nature be kept strong and sweet, the head glorious with light, the heart more glorious with love. Whilst sympathising with my whole heart with every well-considered movement for the better housing of the poor, I must always protest against the vicious sophism, that character is the product of circumstances,—a narrow and cruel doctrine which is not only in direct opposition to the deepest teaching of Christianity, but is directly contradicted by the most obvious facts in human history. Any action based on so palpable a sophism must be empirical, superficial, and in the longrun abortive. It is this conviction which determines the methods of Christian philanthropists, and exposes those methods to the sneer of the energetic reformers, who with impotent vigour

address themselves exclusively to the readjustment of circumstances. To the worldly mind nothing can be much more ridiculous than to mock the poor by the erection of mission-halls. But the mockery may easily be in excess of the information. The mission-hall is itself but a symbol; a symbol which, being interpreted, means, care of the body; care of the mind; advice under difficulty; protection against injustice; the way to the saving Cross; an answer to the heart's weariest trouble; bread for the soul's intolerable hunger. In a word, the mission-hall symbolises the solemn truth that the stream cannot be cleansed until the fountain is purified.

VIII

CHRISTIANITY AND THE CHILD

By WILLIAM BROCK

VIII

Christianity and the Child

The aim of the present Essay is to inquire in what definite form Christian truth may be most fitly presented to English children of the present day. Such an inquiry, while less strictly theological than those which have already occupied the reader, has the advantage of suggesting a practical test of the value of our theories; and it is by no means irrelevant to the general purpose of the volume. If the substance of the Ancient Faith is to be preserved intact, nowhere is it more essential to guard it than in the instructions of the Home and the School. But nowhere is it more indispensable so to present it that its beauty and majesty may only shine the clearer in all the searching blaze of Modern Light.

It is proposed to consider, first, some of the existing facts which point to the necessity for such an inquiry; then, some of the more recent changes which must influence its course; and, further, some of the specific results to which it may reasonably conduct.

I. Some existing facts in regard to religious teaching

The present condition of religious teaching in our Homes and Schools discloses a variety of opinion and practice which is sufficient to emphasise both the interest and the urgency of the discussion.

1. There is one system of religious instruction under

which a large proportion of the children of the land are growing up, which, whatever we may think of its tendency, is at least perfectly definite and coherent. "Church teaching," as it is expressed in various catechisms and manuals for the young, sounds its one monotonous note with unmistakable significance. The Church, whether it be the Church of Rome or the Church of England, and in either case, external, visible, represented by its priests and operating through its sacraments, is the kingdom of heaven. Membership in the Church is salvation. The child is taught, that in his baptism he entered the Church, and passed into a state of grace; that from the Church he must receive what he is to believe, and what he is to do; that the Church, by her ministers, will absolve him from his actual sins, and confer on him the gift of the Holy Spirit; and that at death the Church will supply him with his viaticum, and secure his entrance into glory. The creeds of the Church, no doubt, instruct the learner in the doctrines common to all Christians, and direct him to the divine fountain of salvation. But it is one of the facts with which we have to reckon, that the tremendous stress laid on the priest and the sacrament must certainly obscure the sense of the invisible realities, and tend to arrest numbers of our young pilgrims on the threshold of the shrine.[1]

2. There is, at the opposite extreme of opinion, the disposition to bring the child up in avowed Agnosticism or active unbelief. It is impossible to judge to what extent such a disposition prevails. It would appear to be confined at present to a section of the cultured classes; for the vast majority of our working people, whatever their own regard or disregard for religion may be, send their children to be

[1] The curate in charge of a parish in the South of England had been instructing the children of the Sunday school in the dignities of the priestly office, and wound up by asking, "Tell me, what am I?" A little girl volunteered the answer, "Please, sir, you are God."

instructed in its truths. Even among some of the most advanced Agnostics, there is a laudable reluctance to bring young people up in the atmosphere of doubt. There is no more pathetic passage in the life of that fearless and candid spirit, the late Mr. Romanes, than the letter in which, while himself as yet unable to accept the Christian faith, he avows his desire that his boy should be spared as long as possible the knowledge of his own uncertainty, and, meanwhile, should be surrounded with Christian influence.[1] But it is scarcely to be expected that unbelievers in general would exercise such a reverent constraint. Marie Corelli's tragic story of *The Mighty Atom*, with all its exaggeration, is, perhaps, the index to a growing movement of the actively destructive order, as it is no unfair exposure of the melancholy result which such a movement involves. It may well startle us to think that English boys and girls are being taught, as John Stuart Mill was taught in an earlier generation, to look upon all religion as superstition, and the Christian religion, in particular, as a tissue of fables.

3. A much wider tendency is in a less positive direction. It is a reaction, and, to a certain extent, a wholesome reaction, from the stiff catechetical discipline which required from the child definitions of original sin and effectual calling, of the nature of evil spirits, and the wrath to come. All will sympathise with the wise caution that we should not unnecessarily burden the opening mind with the perplexing problems of theology. But the reaction may extend till it involves the exclusion of all definite religious conceptions. Children are then allowed to form their own fancies on the most august realities. Teachers limit their instructions to ethics, and are contented if their scholars grow up fairly well-behaved. In point of fact, there are many cases like that of the late Lord Shaftesbury, in which the child would be left in absolute religious ignorance but

[1] *Life and Letters of G. J. Romanes*, p. 159.

for the gracious influence of a Christian nurse. Parents abdicate their holiest functions, and suffer their children to grow up uninstructed even in their Bibles, and in the simplest truths of religion. A recent American writer affirms that among college students in that country "an ignorance of the Bible exists to an extent that would have been inconceivable a generation ago. Some of them are victims to the idea that the Bible should not be read by the young, for fear that they should be prejudiced in a religious way. The fundamental cause of the ignorance is the neglect of its use in the home in childhood."[1] A still more serious statement has been made by a writer of great authority at home. "Look how the English people treat their children. They have ceased, almost consciously ceased, to have any moral ideal at all."[2]

4. What, then, is the position occupied by Evangelical Nonconformists in relation to the religious culture of the young? We stand equally opposed to the Romanist and the Agnostic; but it is often urged that our own teaching has become colourless and undefined. Our fathers had catechisms; we have only hymn-books. Their lessons were clear, even if they were cold; ours, it is said, are apt to be vague and negative, and even to degenerate into what a friendly critic has described as "a feeble evangelical dilution." Now, if we are to count in the energetic onward movements of the day, we must have some distinct conception of what we wish our children to believe. It may, or may not, take the old method of question and answer. It must, of course, be simple and elementary; it must be open to modification; it must be drawn direct from the New Testament; but it will be a "form" or "pattern"[3] of

[1] *Harper's Magazine*, March 1895, "The Bible in America," by the Editor. The Bishop of Winchester, in a speech at Guildford, has lately uttered a similar warning in regard to English boys and girls.

[2] *Natural Religion*, p. 134.

[3] Rom. vi. 17; cf. 2 John 4.

teaching in the apostolic sense, and it will embody what we conceive to be the substance of saving truth.

The attitude taken up by Nonconformists in regard to religious instruction in schools supported by the State has given rise to considerable misunderstanding. Because some object to the teaching of the Bible in those schools, it has been concluded that they are indifferent to the teaching of it anywhere; whereas it is their very reverence for the Bible that makes them anxious that it should be taught in the right place and by the right person, not as a mere school-book, but as a divine revelation. Because others have expressed themselves satisfied with the method of Bible instruction adopted, for instance, by the London School Board, it has been taken for granted that they desire nothing further for their children, and "undenominational" has been made, in some quarters, synonymous with "Nonconformist." Now it is true that many of us are content with the so-called "compromise"; but it is because nothing more can be fairly taught at the expense of the ratepayers, and we are jealous of any infringement of the present limit. It is a mistake to imagine that in our own religious culture of the young we have nothing more positive to inculcate. We teach the whole subject of religion in our voluntary Sunday schools, in a manner in which we should never dream of asking to have it taught in the day schools of the State. No Episcopalian can be more earnest on behalf of definite Church teaching than many a Nonconformist parent is to indoctrinate his children with the truths which have been the life of his own soul. We can agree with Canon Gore that "we need accepted religious truths—that is, dogmas—to give power to our common life."[1] Only we maintain that spiritual things must be taught by spiritual men.

5. There is yet another voice to be heard; and it is

[1] *Creed of the Christian*, p 5.

that of the person most immediately concerned. The thoughtful child is indeed, after his own manner, a theologian already. Our literature has recently been rich in incidents illustrating the excursions of his fresh and vivid imagination into the world of the unseen. The humour which marks them is not so impressive as their pathos. "The poor little hard-pressed brain" is seen striving to grapple with the meaning of the universe. Its curious questionings are the outstretching of a hand that seeks a guide. Doubtless the response may often have to take the tone rather of restraint than of stimulus; but it should never take the tone of contempt. We do not want our children to become pedants or dreamers; we do want them to think, and we should encourage them in thinking. We should avoid overdoses of doctrine as we would overdoses of physic. But as we decline to give them the run of the medicine chest, and are at pains to make the proper selection for them, so, since they will have religious ideas of some sort, we must take care that those ideas are true.

To send them out into the world without any such careful preparation, is to place them at an unfair disadvantage. They ought, indeed, by degrees to form convictions of their own; and no sensible teacher will expect or desire that his scholars should accept unquestioned the precise articles of his own faith. Let our young soldiers win their own spurs; but do not send them unarmed and untrained into the battle. The uninstructed youth is apt to become the ready victim of a shallow scepticism or a blind superstition. On the other hand, the strongest and surest believers, in innumerable instances, trace their faith, not merely to the general religious influence of the home, but to the definite religious lessons imparted there. Timothy had only to "continue in the things which he had learned and been assured of." The theology of Augustine had its

germ in "what he heard as a boy of the eternal life promised by means of the humility of the Lord condescending to our pride."[1] Doddridge and the Wesleys illustrate the same law of continuity. Mr. Ruskin can refer us to the very chapters of the Bible by the truths of which, as he says, his soul was established in life. Even where there has been a complete change of opinion, there is sometimes to be detected a strange survival of the earlier beliefs. The fresh sweet current of Christian truth runs far out into the salt sea of doubt or unbelief. "I should urge you," writes George Eliot to her friend Mrs. Ponsonby, "to consider your early religious experience as a portion of valid knowledge, and to cherish its emotional results in relation to ideas which are either substitutes or metamorphoses of the earlier."[2] The sigh of the exile for the home he has left sounds in such words. What is so precious and so enduring it must be well worth the utmost effort to provide; and to provide in a form the most distinct, the most attractive, and the most consistent with modern investigation and enlightenment.

II. SOME RECENT CHANGES IN THE TENDENCY OF RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

The difficulties of the task are accentuated, because the changes of the last half-century have been in all directions unusually large and rapid. The effect on the whole religious atmosphere has amounted to a revolution. Some observers express their doubt whether "the Reformation itself left a world so different from that which it found."[3] We look at the same spiritual landscape as our fathers looked at; but the entire perspective is shifted; objects once prominent lie in shadow; other objects have emerged,

[1] *Confessions*, i. 17. [2] *Life of George Eliot*, vol. iii. p. 253.
[3] Miss Wedgwood, *Nineteenth Century*, September 1896, p. 422.

and stand out clearly, and challenge the attention. The Ancient Faith must be adjusted to the Modern Light if it is to be visible to the modern eye. And if the caution is everywhere necessary, where should it be more carefully observed than in the training of the men and women of the next half-century, destined, perhaps, to witness a still greater advance than their fathers?

When we speak of change, however, it is easy to fall into exaggeration and panic. "The firm foundation of God standeth," a rock in the midst of the rolling waters. The substance of truth which the English mother of to-day has to impart is what was taught by Lois and Eunice in the first century, by Monica in the fifth, by Robert Raikes and Hannah More in more recent times. Even in form and method much which we learned in childhood is far from being obsolete. Oliver Wendell Holmes recurs in one of his later letters to the "hymns of dear old Dr. Watts, which lulled me when a babe, and will mingle, I doubt not, with my last wandering thoughts." There are questions and answers in the "Child's Catechism" by the same author which survive in some memories, and still commend themselves to some understandings. The older school of thought can teach us much. The majesty of God was often upon their lips; His omniscience also, and His righteousness, and the grandeur of His moral government. They saw vividly the guilt and misery of sin, and, with a corresponding clearness, the wonders of redeeming grace. They produced a noble type of character; sterner and more austere than ours, perhaps less sensitive to sorrow, certainly less widely sympathetic; but, on the other hand, distinguished by a faith that rarely doubted, and a loyalty that never quailed, and religious emotions as strong and deep as they were silent and still. We have outgrown some of their opinions, but it will take a long while to outgrow *them*; and while it may be an advantage not always to express

our teaching in their words, it would be a calamity if it were ever to become divorced from their spirit.

It may be convenient at this point to indicate some of the more active influences of the age which have to be borne in mind in our religious instruction of the young. Four in particular may be selected, the decline of mere authority in matters of belief, the rise of Biblical Criticism, the growth of humanitarian sentiment, and the widespread sense of the remoteness of the Supernatural.

1. *Authority in Matters of Belief*

Fifty years ago, authority was still the accredited instrument in general education. The lesson in language or in history was learned by rote from the text-book with little effort at explanation by the teacher, and still less opportunity of inquiry by the scholar. The spirit of inquiry was apt to be mistaken for a spice of rebellion; and a boy who might suggest some difficulty in a Scripture passage was silenced by a frown. Now authority must always enter largely into the earlier stages of instruction. We must all begin by accepting something on the testimony of others. But the whole tendency of modern education is to subordinate authority to reason. The scholar is encouraged to question, to doubt, to require a reason for the things which he is told. As he advances, his prime business becomes inquiry and investigation; "scepticism the highest of duties, and blind faith the one unpardonable sin." It is inevitable that a disposition of mind thus acquired in ordinary studies should make itself felt in religion. We may rightly point out that scepticism is not, after all, so unmixed a virtue as is represented, and that there are regions of thought where the faculty of faith is indispensable. But we cannot any longer meet the questions of our young people with the reply, "I say so," or "the Church says so," or even "the Bible says so." *Why*

does the Bible say so, is the instant challenge of the active mind. We must be ready to explain its meaning, and to show the reasonableness of its declarations; we must appeal, not only to the instinct of obedience and trust, but to the verdict of the understanding and the conscience. We should stimulate reverent inquiry, rather than attempt to silence it. Nor need this be done with reluctance or regret. It is the apostolic counsel to "prove all things." It is the fundamental principle of Protestantism that "we do not accept the truth of the teaching of Holy Scripture merely because we acknowledge the authority of Holy Scripture; it would be more accurate to say that we acknowledge the authority of Holy Scripture because we accept the truth of its teaching."[1] Our Lord Himself while speaking with the highest authority, constantly challenges the consent of the candid mind. "Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice."

2. *Our Conception of the Bible and its Use*

The development of critical inquiry has had the effect of modifying, in some respects, our conception of the Bible. We have a conviction as firm as our fathers had of its unique character as a record of divine revelations; and we teach our children to turn its pages with the olden reverence and love. But we cannot present it to them exactly as it was taught to us. It is no longer the mysterious aërolite, fallen in one glowing mass from heaven, and incapable of analysis; it is rather a succession of stratified deposits, each with its own history to be ascertained, and its characteristic contents to be explored. It is a book, but it is still more a library or a literature, comparable in extent and variety "to a selection of English literature from Bede to Milton." It comprises poetry and philosophy, tradition and history, familiar letters and pro-

[1] Dale, *Protestantism*, p. 63.

found treatises, the regular narrative of the biographer and the raptured vision of the seer. It has its outer and inner courts, its sanctuary, and its Holiest of all. It must be taught with a fine sense of proportion, a light touch on matters of more transitory interest, and a stress upon essential truths. The old axiom, which assumed that every pin of the tabernacle was as precious as the altar or the ark, can be no longer admitted. It is the very reverse of the fact. There are indeed persons now living who can well remember how they trembled in their childhood, lest in their Scripture lessons they should misplace a letter or mispronounce a word, and so bring the curse of Rev. xxii. 19 upon their heads. It was time that such bondage should be broken. It is not for the monotone of an awful oracle that the child is to listen when the Bible is read, but for the varying cadences of the voice of a friend.

If the literary composition of the book, and its other human elements, are properly explained, it is scarcely necessary to instruct the young scholar in the detailed results of Biblical Criticism. He will now be prepared in due time to consider them on their own merits without any painful shock to the understanding or the heart. It will not disturb him, as it has disturbed some brought up under an older discipline, to discover that the first chapters in Genesis do not teach strict science or actual history; that David did not write all the Psalms, or Moses all the Pentateuch; and that there are discrepancies of detail, and signs of addition and correction, in the Gospels themselves. No secret should be made of acknowledged facts like these; but we need not be in haste to make critics of our children. There seems still a certain incongruity, even where the work is ably and cautiously done, in presenting the Bible "as rearranged by modern criticism" to boys and girls of twelve years old and upwards. It needs the maturer mind

to give proper consideration to the various problems which are involved in such inquiries, and to allot them their true value. They are apt simply to confuse the young scholar and draw off his thoughts from that which he most needs to learn, the divine substance of saving truth. He cannot see the wood for the trees.

Still less can the suggestion find favour, that, because of the new light thrown by Criticism on the Old Testament, we should restrict the religious instruction of children to the New. It is quite likely that, in the choice of Bible lessons, there has been too little discrimination; an unwise attempt to cover the whole field, and a failure to focus attention on the central facts. "The Story of Christ and His People" as contained in the Gospels and the Acts is undoubtedly the principal storehouse from which the steward of truth should be careful to draw. But can anyone who recalls the experience of his own childhood willingly forego the use of the Old Testament in his teaching of the young? The Book of Proverbs was compiled purposely for the religious training of the young Israelite; and it is curious to find a place of honour allotted to it in one of the most modern school-books, the "Chicago Bible," selections from Scripture made in 1895 for use in the elementary day schools of that city. The Old Testament, however, has larger light than the wisdom of the Proverbs. "What children need most," it has been well said, "is some teaching to kindle their emotions, give them an ideal impulse, and start them on the upward path." Prudence and self-interest are splendid safeguards; but for spiritual development we need a nobler nurture—

"We live by admiration, hope, and love."

Hence the value of the Psalms, with their sunny heights of praise and their depths of awe and wonder; and of the biographies of patriarch and king, showing us the struggles of the true man, and his defeats and his victories; and of

the ancient histories and traditions, disclosing the Eternal in His creative activity, His mighty providence, and His righteous rule. It is the Old Testament, in many of its parts, which the child, so far from stumbling at them, understands better than the man. His imagination overleaps the prosaic difficulties of the story, and grasps the spiritual reality behind. While we are fretting over discrepancies and hesitating at miracles, he takes the inner fact in its simplicity, and clothes it with its ideal beauty or magnificence. Genesis itself has been described as a book for babes rather than for scholars. The child wanders with Adam in Eden, or with Abraham among the hills and dales of Canaan, untroubled by variations between Jehovist and Elohist, careless of the line between the historic and the prehistoric, but quite sure that God is in the company. He would lose some of his most precious inspirations if he were cut off from the heroes and saints of the Old Testament. Surely he may retain them without serious detriment to his intelligence. If there are interpolations in the story of David and Goliath, they do not touch the courage and the faith of the adventurous Bethlehemite, or make him a less authentic example of these virtues to the young scholar of to-day.

3. *Growth of the Humanitarian Sentiment*

Another powerful influence on religious thought is the remarkable growth of the humane or altruistic spirit. Half a century ago there were noble philanthropists; but the mass of society was seldom stirred by the sense of imperative duty to the distressed and the downtrodden. It was a sterner and less pitiful world, and we must be thankful for the change. But with increased sensitiveness and sympathy there has come a certain softening of character and a decay of the severer discipline, which is nowhere more perceptible than in school and home. Parental control satisfies itself

with milder restrictions, and too often hesitates to act in presence of the growing self-assertion of the child. Teachers are slow to punish, and even censure is made lenient. It is inevitable that the effect should be felt alike in the form and the colour of religious teaching. The element of fear was never absent from the lessons of our childhood. Sometimes it was even an element of terror. "Why are you afraid of God's anger?" is asked in the Child's Catechism, prepared by Isaac Watts for children of three or four years old. "Because He can kill my body," the child is to answer, "and make my soul miserable after my body is dead." The very cradle song, otherwise so simple and beautiful, with which the mother lulled her little one to rest, contains such a verse as this—

> "'Twas to save thee, child, from dying,
> Save thee from the burning flame,
> Bitter groans and endless crying,
> That thy blest Redeemer came."

No mother could sing that verse now; no teacher could dictate that answer. We have moved, during the lifetime of men in middle age, out of one atmosphere into another. The pendulum of change has indeed swung to the opposite extreme. Many parents would now hesitate to speak to their children of divine punishments at all. In their estimate, sin is but a slip or an infirmity, venial in a man, and almost imperceptible in a child; and judgment and condemnation have passed into figures of speech. God is an indulgent and almost an indifferent Father, embracing bad and good in His universal but shallow benevolence. If it is impossible for children to escape the influence of such opinions, it is impossible for us to ignore them. The humanitarian sentiment has softened our views of religion, but it must not be allowed to emasculate them. We shall take no step backward toward the old unnatural harshness; for it was a slur on the nature of God, and a contradiction to His word;

and we shall studiously guard our little ones against alarm. But it is equally culpable to conceal from them, as they grow older, the more awful aspects of truth. A God in whose Fatherhood there is no reserve of severity, a universe whose soft sunshine is never darkened by cloud or disturbed by thunder, are as useless as they are unreal. "There is no nerve," says Dr. Bushnell, "in a Gospel of mere speculative philanthropism." If we are silent about the fires of hell, let us make perfectly plain the permanence of the moral law, and the certainty of retribution. We may prefer in our instructions to dwell most on the mercy of God; but that mercy must be presented in its true majesty, moving hand in hand with righteousness, and bringing pardons sealed with blood.

4. *Fainter Sense of the Supernatural*

There remains the most serious of all the changes with which we have to reckon. The last forty years have witnessed the exaltation of natural science almost into a religion, and a corresponding decline in the sense of the supernatural. The earlier tendency of the principle of evolution, in particular, was to banish the idea of God to a great distance, and to dim the vision of a world behind the veil. It is true that the materialism with which we were once threatened is now seen to be by no means involved in the new philosophy; and the first alarm has given place to interest and inquiry. But a new atmosphere of thought has been created, which the young scholars of our day inhale with their early lessons, with the literature which they read, and the conversation to which they listen; and it must affect their apprehension of religion. They must, if they have any intelligence, look at the history of mankind, and at the proofs of creative intelligence, from a new standpoint and in a new light. They may be tempted to relegate all religious questions to the region

of the unknown. For if nature is once made all in all, God may be dispensed with—"*mis en disponibilité*" is the recent French phrase—and forgotten. And it may follow, in the words of F. W. Myers, "that the portion of the educated world which Science leads, will wake up to find that the great hope of a future life, which inspired their fathers, is insensibly vanishing away."[1]

The theory of evolution has its acknowledged limitations; and the extent to which it may modify the expression of theological thought is matter for inquiry. We should point out to the learner that it does not profess to touch the substance of religious truth. "Spiritual powers," says Mr. Darwin, "cannot be compared or classed by the naturalist."[2] We should show where and how it may properly influence our conceptions of particular doctrines. But above all, we should seek to reinforce the sense of the supernatural by pointing to the positive present facts of Christian experience and conduct, to the movements of God in history and daily life, to the revelations of Scripture, and to Jesus Christ. If only the reality of His mission is acknowledged, a door is at once opened into heaven, and the Father is revealed in the Son.

III. SOME RESULTING OUTLINES OF RELIGIOUS TEACHING

It remains to inquire in what form the particular truths which we desire to teach emerge from the legitimate influences of the age, and how they should be presented to the opening mind. It is only an approach to the answer that can be here attempted; and even the approach is made with diffidence.

[1] *Science and a Future Life*, p. 2.
[2] *Descent of Man*, vol. i. p. 186.

1. *The Nature of the Child*

The child has to be taught something of his own nature; and this is the first point on which the teacher must desire to be accurately informed. He will draw his conclusions largely from his own observations; but he takes advantage of such careful "Studies of Childhood" as Professor Sully has recently collected, of the results of Christian experience, and of the unerring guidance of the New Testament.

There is one element of confusion from which at the outset we may keep our subject clear. The idea that the child comes into the world under God's wrath and curse, and that, if he dies in infancy, he is excluded from God's presence, has no place in our belief. Equally foreign to it is the corresponding doctrine, that by the waters of baptism the sinful little soul is washed white and made a possessor of eternal life. We know no distinction between infants baptized and unbaptized. The blessing of our Lord fell upon all children, when He took the little ones of Capernaum in His arms and claimed them as His own.

The child comes into the world, it is true, with an inheritance of evil. The signs of a Fall, for which any authentic theory of evolution must find room, soon make themselves manifest, and a bias is disclosed which could not have sprung from the will of the Creator. But this is not his only inheritance. His nature is like a pool where sweet and bitter waters mingle, or like a plant with a root of one kind and a graft of another. A pure and pious ancestry may bequeath its benediction to the generations that follow in an innate disposition to virtue and godliness. But above all, the impress of the Father of spirits is to be discerned. The child arrives already to some extent furnished and prepared for the life which he has to lead. There are signs soon evident of an Origin as well as of a Fall; of moral

faculties which are surely direct gifts from God; of a personal will, apart from all heredity, which will presently make it possible for him to appropriate the revelations of heavenly love, and so to overcome the less favourable tendencies of his nature and environment.

No one who knows children would venture to claim for them the reputation of angels or saints. Saintliness and the deeper spirituality are the attainment of long and painful experience. The innocence of childhood is beautiful; but it is of an equilibrium as unstable as that of primitive man. If "sin is lawlessness,"[1] the germs of it may very early be detected in the child. "I won't" and "I don't care"—words which so soon find utterance—betray at least a certain moral imperfection. The cool falsehoods of some children, the mean excuses of others, the bursts of passion, the signs of greed or jealousy or even malice, are not, it is true, to be judged too seriously in such youthful culprits; but they are the seed out of which may easily develop the sins and shames of later life. Even among some of those brought up under religious influence there arise sad instances of evil which show the unregenerate nature, active from an early age, and too strong for ordinary education. There are few grown boys or girls whom we need hesitate to teach what was taught with many proofs and particulars a generation ago, that they have "sinned against God in thought, word, and deed, and deserved His anger." To exclude the mention of sin is to attempt to obliterate a spiritual fact. Experienced observers express no uncertainty here. "I am daily more and more struck," wrote Dr. Arnold from the midst of his Rugby work, "with the difficulty of meeting the various temptations, both intellectual and moral, which stand in the way of boys; a school shows as undisguisedly as any place the corruption of human nature, and the

[1] 1 John iii. 4.

monstrous advantage with which evil starts in its contest with good."[1]

On the other hand, the child comes up into life with many right dispositions, and many splendid capacities for good. His endless questions about God and the unseen disclose a surprising readiness of understanding. He is eager to know all that we can tell him on such themes, and full of quaint fancies and ingenious explanations of his own. He can submit cheerfully to law as well as defy it. Like his elders, he approves the right even when he follows the wrong. He is capable of self-sacrifice as well as self-seeking. He can readily be taught to pray; and his prayers are often of the most sincere and pathetic character. Love to God and an anxious desire to please Him are sometimes manifest at a very early age. It is untrue to speak of the child nature as utterly depraved. Examples of depravity can easily be presented, and considering the environments in which they are formed, they are not surprising. But in the heart of the roughest lads, if only the teacher digs deep enough, he comes at last to the waters of repentance; and from the same class the "Boys' Brigades" are fast producing an altogether unexpected power of order and obedience. Capacity for uprightness and honour, for kindness and generosity, for religious faith and loyalty, shows itself among all classes of our English youth. And, indeed, most of us can point to some favoured instances in which children seem to grow up almost without blame, so consistent is their conduct and so sweet and devout their disposition.

There is an aspect, therefore, of the nature of the child in which its movements need to be developed rather than repressed. The moral faculty waits to be instructed, and the religious experience to be cultivated and confirmed.

"To live by duty is in itself rudimentary religion."

[1] Arnold's *Life and Correspondence*, vol. i. p. 338.

Morality is the basis of religion. The theologians of the past generation might have objected to the statement; but it would be well if in our practical instructions we laid the stress which they laid on morality. For indeed the Ten Commandments, wisely understood, have as real a bearing on religion as the Lord's Prayer. "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not," make plain the path of the child, and hedge it in with wholesome warning and restriction. "Children, obey" is the one special word which Paul addresses to the young.[1] Let obedience take the wider form and breathe the warmer spirit of the Sermon on the Mount, and it is already the germ of faith and love. Encourage the child to be dutiful to his parents, and affectionate and self-forgetful, and you have prepared him to accept the higher obligations; and if he is willing to accept the obligations of religion, he is not far from accepting its offers of strength and salvation.

A child's religious experience is often very beautiful and true. It is also as a matter of course imperfect and onesided; and the earnest teacher has often been in too much haste to correct it. He has tried to fix the child's thoughts in a particular mould, or to force them to an unnatural maturity. He has been dissatisfied unless the child could feel himself a great sinner, and accept in all its fulness the divine way of salvation. Sometimes words of ecstatic devotion have been put into his lips; or a public confession of faith has been prematurely asked of him, and, perhaps, prematurely made, with unhappy consequences at a later stage. Now all these things may properly follow as his experience increases; but a child should be allowed to remain a child. "Line upon line" is the rule to be observed in his instruction. Let him yield Jesus frank and loyal service, and pray with unquestioning trust to his

[1] "Obedience, prompt, implicit, and almost unconscious, is the first thing to be taught to a child; and he can have no peace for his soul without it."—Sir Henry Taylor.

Father in heaven; and by degrees the deeper sense of things will dawn. Let him be taught to listen to the voice of conscience, and he will soon discover the reality of sin and the need of pardon. Let him be encouraged to fight his own battle, and sense of his weakness will awaken the cry for heavenly aid. In many instances our young pilgrims may pass onward from grace to grace, not without many faults and shortcomings, but spared at least the dreary waste of ungodly years, or the catastrophe of a great transgression. The blossom may fall, but the fruit will follow; and we might be more successful in our spiritual husbandry, if we acted more on this expectation.

Such a conception of the child's religious life in no way contradicts the necessity for conversion. Conversion is turning to God, and turning to God may be the work of an instant or the gradual movement of years. Those are the most striking instances in which the turning-point is marked, as in the case of Saul of Tarsus or Augustine, by a voice from heaven at a given time and place; but conversion is as true when it comes slowly like the verdure of an English spring. Those who seem to us the best and most blameless will respond to the appeal to "turn to God." They, too, are conscious of having "turned every one to his own way." Struggles pass in their young hearts of which they rarely speak. They have convictions of sin which, if they were freely uttered, would astonish us. They understand the Parable of the Barren Fig Tree. They understand that of the Prodigal Son, and it is often with tears and prayers like his that they arise and come to their Father.

It is most desirable that all young persons, before they pass into manhood or womanhood, should be personally confronted with their duty in this respect. The Church of England has its Confirmation Service; and a hallowed hour it has been to many of her sons when, with their own consent, they were pledged to "confess the faith of Christ

crucified, and to continue His faithful soldiers and servants unto their life's end." We also ought to summon our boys and girls to decision in the same great Name. It should be made less easy than it often is for them to slip out into the world unconverted. For to do so is to miss their grandest opportunity. "Rejoice that such a word as conversion, signifying such a thing, has come to light in our modern era. Here a man's spiritual majority commences; henceforth he works in well-doing with the spirit and clear aims of a man."[1]

"All things are of God"; and the regenerating grace of His Spirit is as active in the development of the new life in Timothy as in the sudden awakening of the Philippian jailer. We hold as firmly as our fathers held the necessity for the new birth. Perhaps we look for the traces of it over a wider field. It is always God who works in us for our salvation, whether He snatches a wandering sheep out of the very jaws of the lion, or leads the lambs of His flock forth along the paths of peace. "We know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of Him."[2]

2. *The Child's Thoughts of God and the Unseen World*

A firm belief in an unseen world seems to be among the earliest experiences of the child. His imagination quickly seizes on the dream of a fairyland peopled with mysterious forms and full of unlikely adventures. More serious teaching prompts him to construct a heaven, if not also a hell, after his own mind, and to fill it with orders of supernatural beings. There is perhaps no direction in which, without scorning his flights of fancy, it is more necessary to guide and sober them. We do not grudge him his glowing material conception of heaven. Streets of gold, a shining river, palms and crowns and a white-robed multitude stand as inspired parables of the eternal fact.

[1] Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, ii. 10. [2] 1 John ii. 29.

But when it is believed, as some American children are said to believe, that "good people, when they die, go to the country," or that God "lives up on the hill," and can be approached by climbing the apple tree,[1] there is surely room for a little spiritual colouring to be added to the materialism of the thought. A child may easily be made to understand that heaven is first a character and then a place, and that to cultivate the character is the best way toward understanding the place. It is a change almost entirely for the better that the continual mention of heaven and its angelic inhabitants, once so marked a feature in children's hymns and stories, has given place to a more robust and practical presentation of the Christian life.

Whatever weight we may attach to Satanic influence, the less our children think of it the better. Their minds are singularly apt to weave the notion of the devil into all kinds of forms, some horrible and some merely grotesque. Both the alarm and the amusement thus occasioned are unhealthy. Mephistopheles may be very real to the man; there is no need for him to be allowed to haunt the child. His very image should be kept far in the background. "Do you not believe in the devil, sir?" was once asked of Robert Hall. "No, sir," he replied; "I believe in God." He well knew the power of the enemy; but his faith was fixed on his everlasting Friend.

The first idea of God which a child naturally receives is from the watchful and tender mother, and it becomes the idea of a Providence. "He keeps me from harm by night and by day, and He is always doing me good," is the earliest confession of the child's faith; it often remains the principal religious conviction of the man. With the attempts at prayer, that dim sense of Providence condenses into the clearer thought of a Father in heaven; and this should by degrees develop into a persuasion of

[1] Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, pp. 122, 126.

the present Friend and Helper, waiting to be gracious, to forgive, and to restore. The love of God is the constant element and the frequent theme of our religious instructions. No theological scruple need now paralyse the mother's tongue, or leave the earnest child trembling in the chill of the outer courts. The universal Fatherhood, of course, embraces him, and the tenderest illustrations drawn from human love are applicable to the divine.

It is perhaps more necessary to be reminded that the thought of sovereignty must go side by side with that of Fatherhood. There is an easy and familiar conception of God's goodness which robs Him of all dignity and all authority. It was never more necessary to teach the child that in the human family the father is also the king. But the Heavenly Father is the Supreme King; in His discipline "all's love, yet all's law." The child must never be allowed to suppose that God can be weak or variable. He must be taught that the law of right and wrong is God's law; that conscience is God's voice; that penalty follows sin, and is God's judgment; and that God's eye watches him, justly and kindly, moment by moment. Children, it is said, will not now brook the thought of God's omniscience. "I'm very sorry, dear, I can't believe you," was the rejoinder of one precocious little man of three years old to his sister's teaching on the subject.[1] If the truth was put in the threatening and hostile tone once so common, such scepticism would not be surprising. But the image of the Father's loving and searching eye, if at times unwelcome, is not incredible even to the youngest. No motive is better fitted to penetrate the child's mind with a wholesome reverence and awe. Let it be coupled with the thought of stainless holiness, unerring justice, and tender consideration and compassion, and it becomes one of the strongest aids in the formation of a true religious principle.

[1] Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, p. 129.

The old Hebrew Psalm, which presents the all-encompassing Jehovah in such imposing forms, overawes, but does not embitter or confuse; and its issue is a prayer full of child-like confidence and hope, "Lead me in the way everlasting."

No opportunity should be lost of impressing on the child's mind the majesty of the Creator. Simple and picturesque his thought of God must be; but with the wonders of the universe in view, it need never be allowed to become mean or unworthy.[1] The youngest mind may be led upward to the throne by the splendour of a starry night, or the roll of the ocean, or the yearly miracle of spring. Nor need the child lose his wonder as he advances in his knowledge. His new conceptions of the order and immensity of nature; of the vast prehistoric ages, and the immeasurable spaces in which countless systems roll; of the wonders of the infinitely little, and the complex processes that have issued in the life of the world of to-day, should but kindle his apprehension of the Infinite God from whom all things proceed. It is not science that makes our young agnostics; it is the want of a positive religious belief, such as should have been interwoven with their earliest impressions. A child trained to believe in the Creator interprets the fuller discoveries of riper years in the light of his faith. The steady ascent of the hill of knowledge does not dwarf the height of the heavens; from the summit they seem to soar even more glorious than from the plain—

> "At Nature dost thou shrink amazed?
> God is it that transcends."

It is urged that we cannot point out to our children the mind of the Creator at work in the direct and specific way in which we ourselves were taught to discern it. The

[1] "The little brain," mixing religious instruction and fairy-lore together, is apt to "picture God as an angry or amiable old giant." —Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, p. 125.

form and colour and perfume of a flower were once accounted for by the answer, God made it so. They are now explained by the history of the species, and the action of its environment. The botanist, it is suggested, has superseded the theologian. In point of fact, he has been his assistant. The more curious and complex the natural evolution, the more admirable must be the intelligence which has assured so fine an issue from so remote an origin. And the vaster the universe appears, with the ever-fresh discoveries of science, the more majestic is the power which created and sustains the whole—

> "A motion and a spirit that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things."

We may still tell the child, God made the flowers. He can be no more denied His own flowers than, to adapt an expression of Mr. Romanes,[1] He can be denied His own universe. Train the child's eye to observe all the delicate processes of natural causation; but accustom his mind to travel upward to the source of life, and to discern everywhere the present God. The example of men like Faraday and Clerk Maxwell shows how fitly a childlike faith may blend with the largest knowledge and the strongest understanding.

Such an assurance enables us to give the child, not only a just conception of the universe, but a fuller and worthier thought of God. It is this august Creator to whom he prays, who watches over him, whom he calls his Father. It is this vast and profound intelligence which searches his heart, weighs his actions, and controls his destiny. These lips of thunder pronounce his pardon, and he may find his home and shelter in these everlasting arms. It gives a new grandeur to the gospel when he is

[1] "God is still grudged His own universe."—*Thoughts on Religion*, p. 122.

taught to recognise in Jesus, half-concealed behind the veil of his human nature, the very Word of God, by whom all things were made.

3. *The Child and our Lord Jesus Christ*

Jesus Christ is emphatically the children's Friend, and they should be allowed to draw their impression of Him direct from His own life and lips. It was usual, not so very long ago, to present Him even to the young in the full panoply of theological definition as "the Redeemer of God's elect, the eternal Son of God, God and man in two distinct natures and one person for ever." All a mother's tact and tenderness must have been needed to bring out of that description a Jesus whom her boy could love. The true method is to start from the historical and the human side, and so to come gradually to the conviction that He whose footsteps we trace is the Divine Saviour of the world.

The teacher's first endeavour, therefore, must be to plant "the story of Christ" firmly in the memory, the understanding, and the heart. The very structure of the New Testament canon shows how carefully this was provided for in the first ages of the Church. The Gospels hold the place of honour; and of the Gospels, the Synoptic narratives, with their homely tale of all that Jesus did and taught, precede the more elaborate memoirs of John. John begins his Epistle by founding all that is to follow on the history of which he and his brethren had been eye-witnesses. The history is presupposed in the other Epistles. It is the scientific order; first the facts, then the inferences and the laws. "A certain nucleus of ascertained fact has been in all ages regarded as a needful prerequisite of faith."[1] The evangelists, it is evident, thought no pains too great in order to secure to young and old an accurate and con-

[1] F. W. Myers, *Science and a Future Life*, p. 122.

nected view of the whole course of events from the first to the last.[1]

The utmost value is to be attached to whatever may help to make the gospel narrative vivid and impressive to the mind of the child. Travel and research have now almost reproduced for us the environment of actual scenery and human life in which it was enacted. The poorest child can tell, from the maps and prints on the schoolroom walls, where the Lake of Galilee or the Mount of Olives lie, and what they are like; he has before his eyes the image of the Pharisee, and the Roman soldier, and the Arab robber from the desert; he can picture the kind of home in which Jesus lived, the food He ate, the dress He wore, the boat He sailed in, the Cross on which He suffered, and the sepulchre from which He rose. It is a pleasant province of the teacher's art to bring such illustrations to bear on the various scenes in the history, and to add others drawn from his own larger information. But another element must be also supplied before the sacred story is made real. The heavenly atmosphere is as essential to its understanding as the earthly environment. The soul of the thing has to be reached. No painting of the contours and colours of Hermon, however exact and vivid, can make us feel the Transfiguration as it really was; it needs the spiritual touch of a Raphael. No traveller's description of Bethlehem or Calvary can bring the child much nearer to the Cradle or the Cross; Mrs. Alexander's simple hymns will make them both leap to life in his ready imagination. "Ecce Homo," even on the lowest view of what He was, involves so much more than the colour of the robe He wore, or the species of the thorns which formed His crown! The child's mind is ready for the whole fact in all its wonder and mystery; and the teacher's task is not fulfilled till he has led him to the

[1] Luke i. 1–4; Acts i. 1–3; John xx. 30, 31.

heart of the story, and presented Jesus in some measure as He was.

We thus approach our Lord's Person on His human side, and allow the Son of Man to become His own interpreter. It is the course recommended to us by His training of the first disciples. "Not direct dogmatic assertions about Himself led up to the first Christian confession, Thou are the Christ, the Son of the living God. but the united and accumulated impression of all He was and did, upon a sincere and receptive soul."[1] Let a child be taught to watch Jesus at His work, healing the leper, comforting the widow, forgiving the sinful, raising the dead, and he will find out for himself how wonderful He is; he will be prepared to hear of the saving virtue of His death, and he will not be startled at His resurrection and ascension.

After the opening glories of the birth, which colour all that follows, the learner will be led, by the short glimpses of the boyhood, to think of Jesus as his pattern of obedience, piety, and faithfulness in common things. The example has itself an immense attraction, and no one appreciates it more keenly than an intelligent child. It starts from his own level in the quiet home at Nazareth; it leads him on by its purity, its gentleness, its tender compassion and benevolence; and if it overawes him at last by its sublime self-sacrifice, it only confirms his admiration. The enthusiasm which an ordinary gathering of men can be roused to exhibit at the name of Jesus, shows how deep a dint must have been made by His character on their hearts in younger and more susceptible days.

Starting from the example, we arrive at the words and the works of Jesus. They form one great revelation of truth; for the works are "signs," and every miracle is also a parable of grace. The child is at home with the Great

[1] Denney, *Studies in Theology*, p. 25

Teacher. Philosophers cannot exhaust that heavenly wisdom; but it is "revealed to babes." Clearer perhaps to them than it sometimes is to us, is the vision of the kingdom which He came to establish, and over which He rules. They can understand that its citizens must be the humble and the holy and those who hunger after righteousness. They can appreciate the beauty of its laws, under which all are to care for one another, and to do right without seeking for reward. They see that they have only to be true children, simple and trustful, in order to belong to it themselves. No less transparent to them is the thought of the Father in heaven, who cares for the lilies and the sparrows, and to whom we pray alike for the coming of the kingdom and for daily bread. By the Parable of the Barren Fig Tree they learn how neglect and ingratitude are sins. From that of the Publican and Pharisee they are taught humility. Faith shows itself in the cries and movements of Bartimæus; and every blind eye opened and every palsy healed becomes a picture of salvation. The child looks and listens and believes; for, as Vinet has said, "faith is simple looking, as a child looks, with no attempt to analyse the object, but receiving it just as it is into the soul."

So, line upon line, he learns of Jesus; and if the process has been wisely ordered, the theological result will not be seriously wrong. The child's idea will answer to Peter's great confession. There is little need, by arguments from without, to prove Him divine: the difficulty is to imagine that He can be anything else. The word atonement may scarcely have arrested his attention; the various theories that attempt to explain it are beyond his depth; but he sings his simple creed and understands it—

> "He died that we might be forgiven,
> He died to make us good;
> That we might go at last to heaven,
> Saved by His precious blood."

Nor, with the great sacrifice in view, need he take long to learn that salvation is free, needing no sacrament to convey, no priest to mediate, no Church to confirm it; "it is Christ that died," and rose and reigns.

It must be the living Christ, our Advocate before the throne, and through His Spirit the indwelling life of our souls, in whom the child is encouraged to believe. "Every child, before it is capable of choice," says Dr. Dale, "is environed by Christ's protection and grace; and its earliest moral life may be a life in Christ."[1] Surely, if the assurance may be given to any portion of the flock that the Good Shepherd is close at hand with a personal knowledge and care for all, it must be to the lambs whom He carries in His bosom. They cannot be too soon accustomed to hear His call and look up into His face. A child's prayers indeed take for granted that Jesus is quite near, that He understands everything, that He intercedes for us with God. Luther's little daughter was sometimes surer of it, as her father confesses, than Luther himself. The boy-martyrs of the early age went in that persuasion cheerful to their cruel death; and Savonarola's glowing faith found no response in all Florence like that which came from the youthful bands whom he sent singing the Saviour's praises through its streets. It is still an immense moral and spiritual reinforcement, when children feel the Divine Saviour at their side and in their hearts. It gives a clear centre to their thoughts; it makes it easy to conceive of God as approachable, a Father to be loved as well as feared. It nerves the young heart to withstand temptation, and bear pain, and overcome the dread of ridicule, and breast the stiff ascent of unwelcome duty. It may well be believed that the presence of the Lord was hardly more real and precious to Moffat or Paton when the spear of the savage was

[1] *Lectures on the Epistle to the Ephesians*, p. 379.

pointed at their breasts, than it is to many an English boy standing up to-day among his schoolfellows for conscience and for Christ.

Thus by their own simple experience may our children be taught the meaning of "the communion of the Holy Spirit"; and, without any elaborate definition of the Trinity, be led on to associate it with "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ" and "the love of God." The whole gospel is theirs as well as ours. It is "not by lowering the truth, but by raising the mind," that the end we have in view for them is reached.

4. *The Child and the Church*

The distinctive mark of the Christian Church is its spiritual character. The nation represents unity of race; the family, unity of parentage; the political party, unity of opinion; but the Church "is held together by unity of faith."[1] Nor is this unity of faith simply intellectual and doctrinal; it is even more the unity of soul, which knits a man by bonds of trust and love, first to his Lord, and then to all his brethren. Wherever a company of such disciples is found, however small and obscure, there is a Church. Where that spiritual mark is wanting, there may be creeds and confessions, sacraments and priesthood, an establishment of religion and all the externals of worship, but there is no Church in the Christian sense, for a Church is composed of saints. Now the saintly character, even in its germ, is the result of a personal conversion. Christians are not born Christians; they become Christians by their obedience to the call of God and the inward working of His Spirit. The basis of church membership is the trust of the whole soul in Jesus Christ as Saviour and King, the

[1] Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, Essay on "The Church and the World," p. 248.

surrender of the will to His authority, and the confession of His name.[1]

The fitness or unfitness of a child for membership, therefore, is not to be decided by his age. Youth is no disqualification. Just as the phrase "adult baptism" betrays a misconception of the position of Baptists, so to confine the fellowship of the Church to persons of an older growth is to mistake the principle on which that fellowship rests. It is the baptism of believers that Baptists teach and practise, and the ordinance is refused to no one on the score of his youth. So into the privileges of the Church Baptists and Independents welcome with equal warmth "both young men and maidens, old men and children," if only they "belong to Christ." It may be expedient, in certain circumstances, that a very young disciple should, for his own sake, wait until he has had some opportunity to test his loyalty by contact with a larger world. It is unadvisable even to attempt to force our older boys and girls into the Church. Let them come of their own accord. But when the desire appears intelligent and well founded, we cannot resist it; for the Church is the household of faith, and the youngest believer has a right to be there.

The same principle, however, equally requires that we do not receive children into membership merely because they are children. The Church should cherish all children with the tenderest care, and, both in home and school, encompass them with holy influences; but the profession of faith in Christ must be their personal choice. It is not children as baptized children, or as children of believing parents, who are citizens of the kingdom of heaven; but children in whom the spiritual ideal of childhood is in some measure realised. Neither birth nor baptism avails here, but "faith which worketh by love"; and what admits to

[1] See the excellent *Primer of Church Fellowship for Use in Congregational Churches*, pp. 22–26.

the kingdom admits also to the Church. The ancient gloss on the narrative of Philip and the Ethiopian still holds good: "if thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest." So considered, church membership appears in its true dignity as neither a dead form nor a barren sentiment, but the natural expression of a valid and joyful experience.

It is the reality of the whole thing that we chiefly desire to impress upon our children. We are jealous for Congregational Church principles, not from a mere sectarian prejudice, but from the conviction that they embody, more closely than any others, the New Testament idea and the purpose of Christ. We are often reminded that our practice falls short of our principles, and we do not deny it; but it is better to strive after the real than to be contented with the unreal. It was no shadow for which our fathers strove and suffered when they stood alike against Prelatist and Puritan for the freedom and spirituality of the Churches; nor must we fail in holding fast and handing down the same immortal principle to the generation following. But we do not train them to be chiefly controversialists; we are more anxious that they should find a strength for their own inner life in the Church of Jesus Christ; a true home, and a school of sacred learning, and an exercise-ground where they may be trained for the service of their fellow-men.

Canon Gore has drawn a vivid and attractive picture, from his own point of view, of the Church as the Household of Grace.[1] He represents her as receiving the newborn child into her arms at baptism, and making him thereby a member of Christ. As childhood ripens into youth, she meets him in Confirmation with the gift of the Holy Ghost, and thereafter nourishes his new life with the body and blood of Jesus. If he wanders, she revives and restores him with the sacrament of penance. She sanctifies his

[1] *Creed of a Christian*, pp. 76, 77.

marriage with her benediction; she comes to him in sickness with the holy oil or other holy ministries; and, in the last great issue, it is she who "ushers his soul into the unseen world."

Such a description does not commend itself to our acceptance, however it may awaken our interest; for it seems to us to set the Church, her ministers, and her sacraments, where only Christ should be. But if we reject that picture, we may substitute for it one of our own. The parent among us is left at first with the whole responsibility for the child. The Church has its classes and its services where it rejoices to receive him, and where ministers and teachers do their utmost for his good; and the members of the Church are usually full of a warm interest in one another's families. But no one comes between child and parent; and if the parent fulfils his duty, there is no need for other teachers; for no religious influence can be so beneficial as a Christian mother's personal instructions. Only when the child expresses a desire to make a profession of his faith does the Church directly intervene. Then, according to Congregational order, the name is announced at a meeting of the members; the community inquire into the application, and the community receive the candidate. He takes his place at the Table of the Lord, welcomed with the right hand of fellowship, recognised as a brother, and henceforth watched over as a son. His own friends and his father's friends gather round him with congratulations on his decision and prayers for his perseverance. He feels himself one of the Lord's household; and there, as the years pass on, he finds his truest happiness. The communion (love-feast and memorial service in one) binds him constantly afresh to his Saviour and his Christian comrades. Somewhere in the Church's enterprises he is introduced to his own post of service, and contributes in his measure to its usefulness. He also, when the time comes for him

to marry, receives the benediction of the Church, as precious to him as if it were called a sacrament; if he falls ill, he is sustained by the visits and the prayers of his brethren; if he wanders or grows cold, they seek him out and labour to restore him; and when death is drawing near, they encompass him with the strong sympathy of devout hearts, more effectual than any sacred wafer or priestly absolution. That, at least, is the ideal which we cherish; and that is what we desire our children to find in the "household of faith."

The Church, however, is more than a home. The days are past when a young Christian might settle down, unreproved, to the enjoyment of his own privileges and the care of his own soul. There is rather on his own part likely to be "a longing for something more magnanimous than the calm and indulgent Christianity"[1] which is still not uncommon. There are budding Greathearts among our sons; and if some of our daughters are adorned with the meek and quiet spirit of Mercy, others are as brave as Christiana. It should not be necessary for such ardent spirits to leave the fellowship of the Church in search of adventure. The Church should be a centre of lofty opportunities and aspirations, like King Arthur's hall at Camelot—

> "Where every morning brought a noble chance,
> And every chance drew forth a noble knight."

But so also should it be a training-ground for the feebler and less enterprising. Even the blind and the lame must have some post found for them on the walls of our Jerusalem; for the law of the kingdom is, "to every one his work." A youth or maiden may have at first to be contented with a humble office, and must follow rather than lead; but the sacred discipline will have begun; and as the French soldier is said to carry a marshal's baton in his

[1] The words were used of Alice Le Strange, afterwards Mrs. Laurence Oliphant.

knapsack, so, from teaching the youngest group of children in the Sunday school, or managing the smallest department of the Guild, a way may open to the career of the preacher, the missionary, or the social reformer. The business of the Church is to keep the sacred passion of humanity alive in the hearts of her children, and to prepare them to become, by their Master's grace, the benefactors of the world.

The Church must continue to instruct as well as inspire; for growth in knowledge is necessary in order to sustained and effectual endeavour. Our young converts, indeed, according to the suggestions of this Essay, are already scholars in the elements of divine learning, and that scholarship will be of signal value. They will be able at once to impart simple lessons from the Bible with intelligence and effect, or to explain to an inquirer what he must do to be saved. But the more they are called to teach others, the more eager they should be to advance themselves. The student of medicine goes from his clinical practice in the hospital back to his lecture-room and his books. Practice makes his eye keen and his hand expert, but science must guide them both. Sometimes a young Christian becomes so soon absorbed in active service that his own learning comes to a standstill. He may do excellent work; but it will be a lifelong weakness and regret that he did not stay longer in the school of divine knowledge, and that no Aquila and Priscilla were found to "expound to him the way of God more carefully." Let the Church see to it that her teachers are taught, and that her evangelists have a full apprehension of the gospel which they preach. Where the home and the school have laid the foundation, let the preparation class, the biblical lecture, the library, the expositions of the pulpit, build up the solid walls of truth. The wise damsels of the House Beautiful take Christiana's boys in hand on their arrival, test their acquirements, approve their answers, and proceed to instruct them further. They

do not spare the noble Christian himself. They have him not only into the armoury, but into the study; "and there they read to him records of the greatest antiquity, and showed him the pedigree of the Lord of the hill, and the acts that He had done, and the names of His servants, and many other famous things." "These," says Bunyan, "are among the rarities of that place"; and, thus instructed, the pilgrim went forth to enlighten and edify the weaker souls he met with in the way.

There are changes even among the inmates of the Palace Beautiful; and it is impossible for modern church members to discourse together in the language which sounds so natural and appropriate from the lips of Prudence, Piety, and Charity. Every age must have its own forms of Christian language and thought. Our children's children will not use the exact dialect in which we speak one with another of eternal things. The expression may be allowed to vary, if the substance remains. Every night, in the old village life, the bank of wood or turf which had built up the tribal fire was swept away, and another was constructed in the morning. But one glowing ember was selected, carefully placed upon the hearth, and covered over with ashes. It was called "the seed of fire." The fuel for the new day was piled round it, and caught from it heat and light. Theological systems are the construction of the age, and every generation may be left to build its own. But here also the "seed of fire" is a sacred trust. The central faith, "once for all delivered to the saints," has been reverently preserved and handed down from the days of the apostles; it has warmed and comforted us; and we in turn bequeath it to our children. That fire, indeed, burns on the altar of the penitent and loving heart in every generation, and shall never go out; for it is "the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever."

IX

THE PULPIT AND THE PRESS

By J. GUINNESS ROGERS

IX

The Pulpit and the Press

It is not too much to say of the Christian preacher, what was once said of the Church, of which he is one of the most conspicuous agencies, that he has been and is "everywhere spoken against." It must be added that, the higher his sense of his vocation and the more fully he realises it, the keener will this criticism become. If he be faithful, he must be a power, and a power which must be obnoxious to all the evil against which it is directed. Were he simply a lecturer on some subject of general interest—on science or literature, politics or ethics—he would be sure to provoke some comments more or less hostile, as well as others of a friendly character. His teaching would probably become the subject of controversy, and be discussed with more or less feeling; but the feeling would be imported, since it is not necessarily involved in the difference of opinion on any scientific or literary subject. It will probably not be often absent, for the differences are so often due to the temperament, or the training, or the surroundings of the disputants, that warmth of feeling is very easily induced. But in the case of a preacher it is present from the first. He speaks with an authority which itself provokes revolt. He is charged with a message from God, and on that very account has to meet with hostile criticism. Certainly he of all men has reason to distrust himself when all men speak well of him. The world has not so entirely changed its character that he can retain its favour, and, at the same time, be faithful to the gospel which he is commissioned to preach.

It is here that one of the chief practical difficulties of a minister of Christ is found. If he does not reach his audience, he is regarded, perhaps comes to regard himself, as a failure. The peril is lest he should seek to secure hearers by appeals which lose sight of the highest ends of his mission, and which, in fact, mean infidelity to his trust. Popularity, it is a mere truism to say, is not a conclusive nor, indeed, an essential element of success. John the Baptist was a mighty preacher, and yet his was the voice of one crying in the wilderness. For a time he attracted crowds, but they did not believe, and he soon found himself deserted. A preacher may be forced into this splendid isolation if he would be faithful, and the loss of popularity may in reality be the most striking evidence of his real greatness and power. A prophet has simply to publish the message of God that (to use the expressive words of Ezekiel), whether men will hear or whether they will forbear, yet shall know that a prophet hath been among them. The supreme consideration for him is, that he be true to the trust committed to him.

But while a faithful servant of Christ may often have to forego all chances of personal distinction, sometimes to separate himself from chosen friends, and continually to expose himself to misconstruction, this is hardly his normal position. Nor is it one which a man of sane mind would willingly choose for himself. His ardent desire—that which must, indeed, be the passion of his soul—is to save men. But how can he hope to save them unless he can secure an audience from them? While, therefore, he has at times to set his face like a flint, and, indeed, must be ready to do it at all times rather than compromise his message in a solitary point, he has, so far as fidelity to his great commission permits, to set himself to secure the attention, win the sympathy, persuade the understanding, awake the conscience of men. "Knowing, therefore, the fear of the Lord,

we persuade men," and in order to effect this, Paul tells us that he "became all things to all men." That single phrase is of itself sufficient to indicate the difficulty of the situation. Interpret it as the apostle did in his whole spirit and conduct, and it is a description of one of the grandest of human lives. Here is a man who is able to cast away all his own prejudices, to be indifferent to all considerations of personal feeling or glory, to put himself in touch with the thought and sentiment of other men at the furthest possible remove from his own, to study and humour their weaknesses, to sympathise with their difficulties and doubts—simply in order that he may help them in the battle of life. Clearly everything depends on the motive. Change that, and alas! it is only too easily changed, so that a purely unselfish desire to glorify God in the salvation of men sinks into a base and sordid ambition for personal aggrandisement, and the whole character of the man's work is debased accordingly. The line of action is largely the same. There is the same close study of humanity, the same elasticity of thought and expression in the effort to meet even its caprices, the same anxious care to avoid that which gives offence, and to play upon all the peculiar tastes and fancies of the individual. But every trace of nobility is gone, and the whole action is degraded into a piece of mere selfish scheming of the most unworthy kind. The lowering of the motive must have some effect even upon the methods employed; for men will stoop to actions for the purpose of securing their own personal ends from which they would have turned away with scorn and loathing had they been possessed by the Christlike passion for saving the lost. Still the essential difference is in the one motive, and the struggle of the Christian preacher is, while following the example of the great apostle, to keep his heart unspotted from the world.

It is necessary to point out how difficult this must often be. The man, who has given himself to the work of the

ministry, in the belief that God has called him to the service, is solemnly bound to use the talents with which he is endowed. To neglect the gift that is in him is to fail in one essential part of his duty. It is sheer fanaticism, and fanaticism of a very bad type—essentially selfish, though unctuous in its pious professions, to indulge in the fancy that God is honoured by a trust in some direct inspiration from heaven which will obviate the necessity for personal effort. But it is manifest that such effort means the study of the methods and arts by which popular success is won. The preacher, if he is wise, will ponder and seek out until he find acceptable words. There will be no department of knowledge with which he will not, to the measure of his abilities and opportunities, seek to make himself familiar. Especially will he carefully study the great masters of human speech, whether in oratory or in song. In these ways he may learn how to employ his own talents to the highest advantage. But this is success, as the world judges success. Perhaps the best preservative against the derogatory and even debasing influence of the popularity which may thus be won is for him ever to remember that this is not success. How far it may be the first step towards it will be very largely determined by the spirit in which it is regarded. It may in truth be the most serious hindrance to those grand results in the absence of which the most popular ministry must be pronounced a failure. "Neither at any time," says Paul, "were we found using words of flattery, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness; nor seeking glory of man, neither from you nor from others." But even had a man the self-renouncing and self-forgetting spirit of Paul when the honour, even though unsought, comes, it is not easy always to detach the heart from it.

The difficulty is increased in our own times by the increased attention which is given to the pulpit and its work by the press. At first sight it might appear as though this were

a distinct gain. But there is, to say the least, another side to it, and one of sufficiently grave import. The preacher of to-day lives under very different conditions from those in which our fathers did their work. The journalist thinks it worth his while to study him, to chronicle some of his proceedings, to criticise any of his special utterances. Now and then we have the "booming" of some eloquent preacher who, for one reason or another, happens to be prominent. He is favoured with the visits of interviewers who seek his views on an infinite variety of subjects, and reproduce them with more or less accuracy. He is made the subject of "pen and ink" sketches, in which he is pleasantly informed as to his virtues and also as to his defects. All this is interesting as a tacit recognition that the pulpit is a force, and a force of a very different kind from that which is suggested by the correspondence on the decay of preaching, which is one of the most common annuals of the silly season. But there are dangers lurking in it, especially to the preacher himself. For the standpoint of the journalist, and that from which a Christian minister should contemplate his own work, are not only different but often distinctly antagonistic. The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God to-day as much as when Paul indited that pregnant and memorable statement as to the kind of success which the gospel had achieved. The successes, therefore, which an observer who judges by a purely worldly standard most appreciates and applauds, may in truth be successes of which, in the higher experiences of his spirit, the preacher may feel heartily ashamed. The critic is not to be blamed for this, for he necessarily judges according to the standard of the world, but the preacher cannot be influenced by him without lowering the whole tone of his ministry.

For to come back to our starting-point, he is a servant of God, or he has no special claim to be heard. It is this which differentiates the pulpit from all other instruments for

influencing the world, and this which must always expose it to a specially keen and searching criticism. If a man has only private theories to ventilate, these may be examined without any special irritation. The discussion is a mere intellectual exercise, in which argument is met by countervailing argument on the opposite side, and the victory remains with him who can show the highest skill and mastery in logic. Man wrestles with man, and there is the end of it. But if this is all the preacher has to say for himself, he is indeed in evil condition. For wherein consists his title to instruct or exhort men in relation to the most tremendous realities of their being here and hereafter? There are numbers who know more as to the world and its inhabitants than he professes to do. Yet he, forced to confess his inferiority to the scientist in one sphere and the statesman in another, to the literary man and the historian on one side, and to the man of affairs on the other, still claims to speak to them all with authority on the question which transcends in grandeur and interest all others. It is hardly wonderful that these wise men of the world should be ready to cry with their prototypes on Mars' Hill, "What will this babbler say?"

That celebrated incident stands on the page of sacred story, a striking representation of what is going on around us to-day. There were many subjects on which Paul would have had to admit the superiority of those Epicureans and Stoics. If it had been a battle of human philosophy, it might have been extremely doubtful whether it would be wise for him to enter the lists. His teaching to them was mere babbling—a vain superstition—an idle dream—a sign of madness, not of reasonable thought. Why should they give heed to these visionary fancies of an unlearned Jew? And if this had been the entire account, they would have been right. There was no reason why Paul should instruct them, or why they should listen, if he was simply

evolving ideas out of his own brain. But had that been Paul's estimate, it is certain he would never have been addressing philosophers on the Areopagus, or indeed have visited Athens at all. He went there as he went everywhere, under the constraint of the divine necessity. If he was mistaken in this, and God did not speak through him, he had no place there at all.

So is it to-day. The preacher has to address himself continually to men at whose feet he might often be content to sit as a disciple, instead of attempting to be their teacher. They could and often do instruct him on matters of high, though not of the highest, import, and he not only listens with interest, but gratefully makes use of their teachings in order to illustrate and enforce his own. Nothing that has to do with the world and its tenants is alien to him. In every field of intellectual activity he finds that which will help him in his own distinct work, and he is grateful to all by whose labours he profits. But he claims that even to those whom he regards as in many respects his intellectual superiors he has a message to deliver. They may scoff at his pretensions, and if it were a question merely of human wisdom, their scoff might have considerable justification. But that is precisely what the preacher does not claim. He speaks in the name of the Lord God, and only as men feel this can he have power at all. Let this be felt, and the difficulty disappears. Paul explains it when he says, "God chose the foolish things of the world that He might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world that He might put to shame the things that are strong; and the base things of the world, and things that are despised did He choose, yea, and the things that are not, that He might bring to nought things that are." That sums up the story of the pulpit. If the gospel has been the mighty power to salvation, and has justified its right to this distinction through all the centuries, the power has been of God.

It has still been the foolishness of preaching in the eyes of those who had neither faith in its truth nor sympathy with its aims, but by it God has saved them that believe.

There is no idle fanaticism here. The preacher does not profess to have some special revelation from God, enjoyed only by such as are permitted to know the secret thoughts of the Most High, and intrusted with a message to men which they are required to receive on his authority. The message has already been given, and men may study it without his intervention at all. He may be enabled to illustrate it by the results of his study, his observation, or his experience; but he must beware how he assumes the character of an expert. In the understanding of the gospel he is not the best expert who has the ripest knowledge of the language in which it was first given, or the circumstances under which it was delivered; but he whose sympathy with its spirit and submission to its teaching has given him the spiritual insight which makes him quick to discern its true meaning. There are still things hidden from the wise and prudent which are made known to the babes; and to the end the childlike spirit will serve the student of the divine message better than the most cultured intellect.

The preacher's first and chief work, especially in a country like ours, is not so much instruction as exhortation. No doubt there are prejudices to be removed, mistakes to be corrected, neglected views of the truth to be more clearly presented. The mind harbours many a false thought which has to be cast out before there can be a humble acceptance of the divine call. But the intellectual difficulties in the way of belief are comparatively small. The most grave and serious ones are those whose home is in the heart. "Commending ourselves to every man's conscience" is the apostle's description of his own work. He, be it remembered, was in a position very different from that of his successor in the pulpit of to-day. His message was a novelty. It must have

had about it that charm of freshness which we so eagerly covet. Sometimes, in depressed hours, we think—would we could have the privilege of telling this wonderful story of the Cross to those who had never listened to it before; that we could see their faces light up with interest as they followed it through all its pathetic and moving details; that we could mark the tear as it glistened in their eye, and then, as their nature had been stirred to its very depths by the wondrous recital, listen to a cry as anguished as that which burst from the multitude who were moved by Peter's first sermon to that outburst of penitence and longing: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Alas! we tell the story to those who have heard it so often that the recital becomes to them as the sound of one that hath a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument. There may be novelty in the mode of presentation, but in the message none. All this (they may say in reply to the most graphic description) have we heard from our childhood up. In our own times the pulpit or the Bible class has not been left a monopoly of the teaching. The stage as well as the novel has undertaken to tell it also, and there have been Christians ready to applaud the effort, without pausing to consider how far this tends to weaken the unique impression of the sacred narrative, without contributing a solitary element of instruction or abiding influence.

Paul had a very different task. His audience listened to the story he had to tell with all the excitement of curiosity and all the high-wrought sensation due to a new and strange marvel. Even the callous and indifferent Athenians were roused by the story of Jesus and the Resurrection. These were new gods, and the very mention of them stirred the stagnant current of their feelings to an unwonted pitch of passion. To-day the preacher has no such aid. Yet even the apostle, speaking to those who were thus uninstructed, still addresses himself to their conscience. If they were to

be converted, the conscience must be awakened. It had to be approached through the understanding, and therefore he preached Christ and Him crucified. But in beseeching men to be reconciled to God through Christ, he did not arrogate to himself any authority to which men were required to submit. He did not speak as a lord over men's consciences, but he persuaded them. He reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, if they were Jews. If they were Greeks, he appealed to the testimony of nature as interpreted by their own poets. Nothing could be more intensely human, and yet his success was due to the secret conviction wrought in their hearts that the power of God was with him. That is the special character of the preacher. He is a power in the only sense in which he desires or can expect such distinction, only as God is with him. If the conscience approve his message that it is the word of God, it has authority, but not authority due to his official position, nor even to any special knowledge he possesses, but solely to the fact that he has been touched by the Divine Spirit.

This distinction between the preacher and the member of any profession needs to be strongly accentuated. Having once dismissed the idea of a supernatural character attaching to it, in virtue of which a man is entitled to claim a superiority to his fellow-men, and to exact from them an allegiance which would not be rendered to him because of his personal worth or eminent service, it is hardly possible to insist too strongly on the points which differentiate the preacher from a lecturer or professor. The latter does his work as any other toiler does his. It is work of the brain, and it may even be of the heart, but it is done as the work of the daily life, with its proper remuneration attached. In short, it is professional, and no shadow of reproach rests upon it because it is so. It does not affect to be anything else, and there is nothing derogatory in the fact that that is

its character. There is a strange but not unfrequent tendency to upbraid men with their care for the pecuniary reward of their honest toil as writers or speakers. It is not only unjust, but it is at once absurd and insincere. That care can easily become excessive, and, what is worse, it may have recourse to unwarranted means in order to secure its objects. But in itself there is nothing unworthy in it. The man who has chosen literature or art or science as his profession is not to be considered mercenary because he insists on having a fair remuneration for his efforts.

Up to a certain point this is true of the Christian preacher. Those who avail themselves of his services should, even in their own religious interest, and still more in that of the great religious work to which they have a common attachment, so provide for his needs that the carking cares of this world shall not hinder the concentration of thought and feeling on spiritual work. But if his first care be to achieve professional success, whether for the sake of the emolument it brings or the honour by which it is attended, he forgets the true end of his ministry, and ensures its failure. It is idle to pretend to superhuman virtues, and foolish to expect it. Preachers are men of like passions and infirmities with their hearers. They cannot wholly escape the taint of the world-spirit. They are not free from the aspirings of ambition or the weak suggestion of vanity. They have to fight the devil in their own hearts quite as strenuously as on the broad field of battle in the world. But at all events they must have their ideal. Even if they fail to reach it, the contemplation of it and the endeavour to approach it has itself an elevating influence. And that ideal leaves no room for the presence of a purely professional temper.

It may be urged, in all fairness, that were this spirit dominant a successful preacher would choose some other calling than that of the Christian ministry, especially in

the Free Churches. There are prizes in a national hierarchy such as the law has established in this country, which may tempt ministers. But they have no existence in Nonconformist communities. It is no vain boast to say that those who achieve distinguished position in their pulpit might have secured in some other career returns both of wealth and fame far in excess of any that the most envied among them has been able to attain. If a man's motives be of the earth, earthy, he had better stifle all inclinations drawing him towards the pulpit. For even success would not bring him what he desires, and, what is to him of even more importance, the very strength of his ambition would be the most serious hindrance to the coveted success. Even the world expects—surely the expectation is not unreasonable—that the preacher of the gospel should be superior to the influences which govern the Stock Exchange, and the moment the dominance of such motives comes to be suspected there will be a gradual decay of the influence which is the evidence of success.

This demand of the world is, we have said, not unreasonable. True, the world is itself possessed by the love of self. Its philosophy is saturated with the spirit of selfishness. Its heroes are men who have learned how to take care of self. "Men will praise you when you do well to yourself" is as true to-day as it was in the distant century when it was first penned. But all this notwithstanding, it looks to its religious teachers for the exhibition of a different spirit. Even in the political world this is the ideal it would have its leaders keep before themselves. The noble Roman who was called from his farm to save his country, and who, when the task was done, laid down the dictator's robe and returned to his farm, has been the theme of many a glowing eulogy. To-day there is no charge which tells more against a statesman than an impeachment of his unselfish patriotism, as there is no virtue which exalts him more in the public

esteem than a disinterestedness which is above even the reach of suspicion. A statesman who through long years of conflict has steadily pursued a course of conscientious integrity, who has shown a calm indifference to the opinions of men, and, whether in sunshine or in storm, has been true to his own ideas of the right, commands respect independent of any judgment which may be passed on his policy. Much more is this kind of virtue required from the preacher of the gospel. If he is not moved by a passion for souls, an unquenchable faith in the gospel, and a glowing enthusiasm for Christ, better that he never preached at all.

In the Apostle Paul we have the finest type of the true minister of the New Testament. His conception of his special functions, his clear apprehension of the message he had to deliver, his recognition of the necessary limitations of his life and work, cannot be too closely studied by the preacher. Unfortunately, we know little of his sermons. We hear of the effect produced on those who listened to him, and we have the broad view of the subject of which he treated. He had to preach the "unsearchable riches of Christ," and he found in that theme enough, and more than enough, to occupy all his powers, without undertaking to discuss the many problems which were agitating the schools of philosophy, or endeavouring to redress all the grievances under which the world was "groaning and travailing in bondage" then as now. But especially is it from the man himself that we have to learn. There is in him a spiritual grandeur, which in itself is stimulating. Christ has so possessed him, that the work which the almighty constraint of love has laid upon him is the passion of his life. There has grown up of late a habit of criticising the great Apostle of the Gentiles, to the depreciation of his actual work, which is unjust to him and ungenerous in those by whom it is

indulged. It is not easy in studying him to leave out of consideration the fact of his inspiration, and it may be useful to make an honest attempt to study him as he may have appeared to an observer who regarded him simply as a preacher, deriving such influence as he possessed either from the convincing force of his doctrine or from the personal character of the man.

As we study the record, we cannot but feel that the first, the strongest, the most abiding impression which he would produce, was that of one so passionately in earnest, that to him his work was everything. On this point the verdict of Festus is as decisive as it was undoubtedly and transparently honest: "Paul, thou art beside thyself." His was the undoubting faith and the consuming zeal which, to a mere self-seeker, with a strong vein of cynicism, must always be unintelligible, and is therefore treated as a mental delusion. Such devotion is so far outside the region of thought and experience in which such a man moves, that he can find no other explanation. No suggestion could be more natural; for if Paul was not mad, Festus undoubtedly was. Their spirits were moving in orbits so entirely apart, that it was impossible to conceive that they could both be in healthy condition. So far, then, this testimony is peculiarly valuable. It is the verdict of an enemy who had opportunities for judgment, and gives us an estimate of character which confirms all the ideas we should have gained, whether from the records of Paul's life or the spirit of his writings. If there had been any reason to suspect the apostle's motive,—any single fact on which to rest a suggestion of insincerity or self-seeking,—any ground on which he might have been branded as an impostor who was seeking to deceive the people,—it would certainly have been presented. But no such hint falls from the lips of the sceptical Roman. He spoke under the influence of an irritation which made him forget the dignity of the Roman patrician; but, even in the

heat of his passion, he does not venture to suggest that Paul was false. His earnestness had this effect, that the governor could only escape from the influence it might otherwise have produced upon him, by treating it as a manifestation of madness.

It is to be accepted as a conclusive evidence that this great preacher lost himself in his subject. What men might think of Paul was to him a matter of no importance: his only concern was, that they should believe in the Lord Jesus whom he preached. Renan is very fond of speaking of him as the "ugly little Jew." There is nothing very dignified, or refined, or telling in the description; but it may be true. He does not shrink from telling the Corinthians that his enemies said that in bodily presence he was weak and in speech contemptible. It may have been so; but what then? It simply shows that the power which he undoubtedly possessed was not due to any external qualities, not even to the grace or vehemence of his eloquence; and we are thus forced to seek another explanation of his undoubted influence. It is to be found in the impression which he produced everywhere, that his soul was possessed by his message. The man who can do this will always be a power. So strong is this force as an element of pulpit power, that it is open to question whether the gospel has suffered most from preachers who have set forth the truth in such a style as to give the impression that it is an unreality to themselves, or from those, on the other hand, who have thrown into the instruction which "causeth to err" a fervour and an earnestness which have secured for their teaching a hold on the minds of men, to which, on its own merits, it was not entitled. Behind the sermon is the preacher, and the extent to which men are affected by his personality, as apart either from the doctrine taught or the form in which it is presented, is a point which the most careful and discriminating analysis may fail to determine This, however, may safely be said,

that a preacher of the gospel can never hope to wield any enduring power, however brilliant his gifts or wide his culture, unless he produce in the minds of his hearers a conviction that the gospel which he proclaims to others has come to his own heart as the very message of God. Under the influence of that, he is filled with that courage which is indispensable to the prosecution of his work. The coward in the pulpit is one of the most pitiable of spectacles; and yet there are temptations to a weakness, as contemptible as it is injurious alike to the man himself and to those who listen to a word which does not so much express his own deep convictions of the truth, as his ideas of what will be most expedient for the hour, best fitted to produce a sensation, in harmony with the *Zeitgeist*, calculated to extend his own reputation and improve his position. These temptations haunt men everywhere, and critics of the pulpit are not slow to point them out.

> "The pulpit's laws the pulpit's patrons give,
> And they who live to preach must preach to live,"

was the taunt adapted by Lord John Russell from Dr. Johnson, and directed against Dissenting ministers. It was unworthy of a statesman, and especially of one who owed so much to those whom he thus held up to the ridicule of those who were his foes as well as theirs. It suggests the action of one of the meanest of motives as governing the public ministry of men whose one fault, which lays them open to his criticisms, is that they do not become the stipendiaries of the State. The preacher would not escape the reproach were he to adopt the contrary course. "Would," says Mr. Goldwin Smith, "that the clergy could write with perfect freedom." Whether this remark is to be restricted to the clergy of his own Church may be doubtful, but it certainly includes them; and, in support of his view, it were easy to quote many a reference from the latest work of the season—

the most attractive biography of a singularly attractive man, the great Master of Balliol. Tennyson puts it in a different form when he makes the "Northern Farmer" to describe the preacher in those oft-quoted words—

"An' I 'eerd 'um a bummin' awaäy loike a buzzard-clock ower my 'eäd,
An' I niver knaw'd whot a meän'd but I thowt a 'ad summut to saäy,
An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said an' I coom'd awaäy."

The notion common to all these is, that the preacher is not necessarily true to himself; and one more fatal to his influence it would not be easy to conceive. If the speaker is not a real man, who out of the abundance of the heart gives to others the lessons which he himself has learned from God, but preaches only what he thinks men will be pleased to hear, and what he is bound by law to preach,—if he is more careful to abide by some legal standard of orthodoxy, than to set forth the truth which has been revealed,—better that he should undertake any other office than that of the minister of the gospel. He, at least, should be a man of the strongest, noblest type—a man who, like the great preacher of the Scottish Reformation, never quailed before the face of man.

There is nothing which so helps a man to this fearless attitude as a true and adequate sense of what the office of the preacher is. Paul's ideal was lofty, and it is set forth very distinctly in his Epistle to the Corinthians. "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." The man who realises this, dare not allow himself to seek the praise or tremble at the frown of man. He has to deliver a message from God; and to be turned aside from his duty by the fear of man, is simply to confess himself unworthy of his calling. The definition of the office itself excludes many who have too readily, perhaps thoughtlessly, assumed its functions. A lecturer on religion, who professes

himself greatly interested in all the problems connected with the human soul and its relation to the infinite; who has closely studied and compared the different ages and countries, and has sought to solve them; who is familiar with the speculations of philosophy, perhaps a master of the science (if such a thing there be) of comparative religion, but has no experience of the living force of spiritual truth, is certainly not a minister of the gospel in the New Testament sense. He may or may not be a searcher after truth, but he certainly is not an ambassador from God, who, having a message to deliver, is straitened until his mission is accomplished. Or the mere Church functionary, who has undertaken to do the particular service which the Church has assigned to him, and to do it in accordance with the obligations he has voluntarily contracted, —whose one concern is that he should not transgress the laws of the Church, and who is for ever appealing to its authority as supreme and decisive,—falls very short of the apostolic conception of the office. Far be it from me to suggest that among the philosophic students or the Church officials there may not be true ambassadors from God. What I insist upon is, that unless they have the divine call,—unless, like the old prophets, they have the "burden of the Lord," and are constrained to speak the divine message which they have received,—they have no rightful place in the pulpit.

It is necessary to emphasise the need of the divine call; but it is not necessary to throw around it anything of a mystical character. It comes in the deepening sense of the grandeur of eternity and its realities; in the hold which Christ and His salvation take of the mind, imagination, and heart; in the quickening of conscience to a sense of the obligation which the love of Christ lays upon all who have felt its renewing power; in the widening and deepening sympathy with humanity which matures into that passion for saving souls, which fired Paul, and which has fired every man who has caught anything of the Master's spirit, and,

like Him, has been intent on working out the divine thought, to seek and to save that which was lost. These are the heavenly visions to which the true minister of Christ cannot be, dare not be, disobedient. These are the divine calls which may appear ridiculous to the mere man of the world, but which are sufficiently intelligible to all who are enlightened as to the things of the Spirit of God. The man, thus stirred, to whom the message of the divine love is the one truth which men need to hear, and who is possessed with the passion to tell it, and to tell it so that men may believe and live, is marked out as an ambassador for God. Such a man speaks, not because he holds the office of a speaker or preacher, but because he cannot help speaking; and he does not trouble to inquire whether his speech is such as man expects or approves. But while he muses the fire burns—then speaks he with his tongue.

It does not follow that what he says, even under this inspiration, is to be received as infallible, or that he is speaking as an ambassador from God, in God's stead; but he has authority only as he speaks the divine message. Mr. Ruskin's exposition of the text, and his exposure of the way in which it has sometimes been perverted, are as admirable in expression as sound in exegesis:

"Ecclesiastical tyranny has, for the most part, founded itself on the idea of Vicarianism, one of the most pestilent of the Romanist theories, and most plainly denounced in Scripture. Of this I have a word or two to say to the modern 'Vicarian.' All powers that be are unquestionably ordained of God; so that they that resist the Power, resist the ordinance of God. Therefore say some in these offices, We, being ordained of God and having our credentials, and being in the English Bible called ambassadors for God, do in a sort represent God. We are Vicars of Christ, and stand on earth in place of Christ. I have heard this said by Protestant clergymen. Now, the word ambassador has a peculiar ambiguity about it, owing to its use in modern political affairs; and these clergymen assume that the word, as used by St. Paul, means an ambassador plenipotentiary;

representative of his king, and capable of acting for his king. What right have they to assume that St. Paul meant this? St. Paul never uses the word ambassador at all. He says simply, 'We are in embassage from Christ; and Christ beseeches you through us.' Most true. And let it further be granted, that every word that the clergyman speaks is literally dictated to him by Christ; that he can make no mistake in delivering his message; and that, therefore, it is indeed Christ Himself who speaks to us the word of life through the messenger's lips. Does, therefore, the messenger represent Christ? Does the channel which conveys the waters of the Fountain represent the Fountain itself? Suppose, when we went to draw water at a cistern, that all at once the Leaden Spout should become animated, and open its mouth, and say to us, 'See, I am Vicarious for the Fountain. Whatever respect you show to the Fountain, show some part of it to me.' Should we not answer the Spout, and say, 'Spout, you were set there for our service, and may be taken away and thrown aside if anything goes wrong with you. But the Fountain will flow for ever.'"

This eloquent passage, pregnant in suggestiveness, contains some truths which need to be strongly accentuated. It is hardly too much to say, that on the due appreciation of their full bearings rests a right conception of the functions and powers of the pulpit. The preacher, as we have already seen, is not a theological expert, to whom men may refer difficult spiritual problems, even as a barrister is consulted on questions of law, or an eminent physician on pathology or hygiene. The simple-minded believer in Christ may be, indeed often is, as capable of imparting wisdom to the eminent theological scholar as the latter is to instruct him. Often in reading the elaborate discussions on nice points of doctrine, in which much metaphysical subtlety is shown, but no certain result reached, one cannot help longing for the plain words of some unlettered disciple, perhaps some nineteenth century Priscilla, who would deal with our philosophic divine as she did with the young Apollos, and in a few plain words, drawn from personal experience, set forth the way of the Lord. Still less is the preacher to be a pioneer in the

path of speculation, startling the world by ideas evolved out of his own ingenuity or spiritual consciousness. He is simply a servant intrusted with a definite commission—an ambassador for God, with a message to deliver to man.

Ruskin rightly comments on the ambiguity of the term. He may be a plenipotentiary with a certain liberty of action, for the wise exercise of which he is responsible; or he may be a Minister commissioned to arrange a friendly understanding, but on definite terms from which he must not depart; or he may be a mere functionary of the State which employs him, its representative, in the common details of business, or on grand ceremonial occasions, such as are anticipated at our own Court during this memorable year. Of course, when these special historic occasions come, there is care that the dignity of the individual may give a certain importance to the office, and thus be a sign of the high consideration in which the friendly Court is held. The qualifications for the right discharge of such a service are not of the most exalted character. It is enough that the dignity of the State be supported with a due measure of "pomp and circumstance." Courtly manners, personal dignity, due regard to the severest demands of etiquette and custom are all that is really essential. If this were a fit analogy for the minister of Christ, if he was simply to play a prominent part in the ceremonials of religion, there would be no occasion for any distinguished qualities either of head or heart. Originality of thought, power of expression, tenderness of sympathy, spiritual wisdom, the rare charm which gives some such power over souls, are almost wasted in the office of a mere functionary. He should be correct, precise, formal, even dignified, but there is no demand on the soul. A subordinate work at its best this of the priest; and if proof were necessary of its inferior character, it may be found in the eagerness the priest shows about the mint and the anise and the cummin; the extraordinary value he

attaches to times and seasons, as though changes of feeling must follow the revolutions of the earth ; the care he bestows on the cut of a vestment or the colour of an altar-cloth ; the minute directions he observes as to gesticulations and attitudes. What a miserable conception of religion underlies it all ! for if this be the work of the ministry, what must the religion be which gives him no higher service ? It is not his work to lead to profounder reverence or larger philanthropy, to make men thrill again with zeal for righteousness or love for God or man, to be an inspiration to languid souls or a stern reproof to wicked ones. He is simply the leader in an imposing form and a majestic ceremony. There is no difficulty in the multiplication of priests. The prophet or the preacher is not to be manufactured, but is called of God.

But there is an ambassador of a different kind. He has a definite service to perform, and one on the success of which the prosperity or power, nay even the very existence of his nation may depend. He is sent to avert war and secure reconciliation between parties who are at variance. On his conduct very much may depend. He may, by lack of judgment or even of tact, widen the breach he was sent to heal, and hasten the war which, it was hoped, he might avert, or at least postpone. It is needful, therefore, that he be a man of exceptional endowments, with power to humour the feelings of others as well as to control his own ; with insight, therefore, into the character of men and the tendency of events ; with well-balanced mind and sympathetic temper. To be lacking in any of these points may be to ensure failure. Especially is it necessary that he understand the policy which he is sent to carry out, and that he be loyal to it in every point. He is employed not to throw out unauthorised suggestions of his own, not to present his individual wishes, but to represent those of his nation. Else he may betray his trust, and make confusion worse confounded. This is the type of the

Christian minister. He is not even a plenipotentiary for Heaven. If he addresses men on God's behalf, it is God's truth, the word of His message, which he has to speak.

The great apostle never leaves us in any doubt as to his conception of what that message is. He is not ever waiting for some fresh revelation which he has to communicate, and which may in fact alter all that has gone before. He has a distinct proclamation, and it is always and everywhere the same. There is to be neither diminution nor development, but the repetition in every varied form and with all strength of emphasis of the one message. You find it in the "word of faith" spoken to the Romans, "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is Lord, and with the heart shall believe that God raised Him from the dead, shall be saved." You have it set forth as the gospel which had been preached to the Corinthians, and in which they lived, that Jesus Christ died for our sins, and that He rose again, according to the Scriptures. You hear it in the earnest appeal to the same Corinthians—that they would be reconciled to the God who was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. It was the text of Paul's first recorded sermon, and it rings in the echoes of his entire ministry: "Through this man is preached unto you forgiveness of sins."

An ambassador simply has to do his sovereign's will, and the will of our King is that all men should turn to repentance and live. It is for His servants to publish the terms of peace, and beseech men to accept them. If this were better understood and remembered, it might save us from many an error and many a weakness. There are some whose minds are possessed by what they hold to be sound beliefs. Unfortunately that faith does not work by love. It has not deepened their reverence nor kindled their enthusiasm. It has led them rather to think of God as though He were like unto themselves, and to judge their brethren by some arbitrary standards which they have been

pleased to set up. They are bitter in their judgments as they are shrivelled in their creeds, dwarfed and contracted in all their sympathies. They test men not by their acceptance of the message, but by their agreement with their theological theories. Too long has this tyranny sat heavy upon the Church. Men are at last shaking it off, once and for ever, and are not to be affrighted by the angry growls or bitter denunciations of the survivors of that old régime, its fossilised representatives, who are for ever prophesying the decay of the Church and the death of faith, because at last Christian teachers are insisting on the message in its simplicity, and refusing to add to or subtract from the plain truth: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved."

It is just as necessary to guard against the wild novelties in which some delight as it is to emancipate the mind from the bondage of old systems. The attention given to-day to the theories and speculations in which men so love to indulge is one of the phenomena of the time. A theory may be crude, absolutely unsupported by evidence, inconsistent indeed with all our own experience and observation, yet if it have about it enough of a sensational character, if it be indorsed by a popular or even a striking preacher,—above all, if it be boomed by some journal,—it must be treated as having some claim to serious attention, and be discussed with a gravity becoming a proposition resting on some weighty authority. But the one authority to which all Christians must bow is that of the message. If it be not according to this word, there is no life in it. Men may be eminent for their gifts and conspicuous in their graces, but at best they are only Christ's ambassadors, and they have simply to speak in His name the word which He Himself has taught them.

Any authority which belongs to the minister of the gospel is that of the King's messenger, not of His represen-

tative. He has to preach the gospel of the grace of God, not some theory of his own. There is abundant room for the exercise of the highest gifts with which a man is endowed in the proclamation of that truth; but whatever the variations in mode of treatment, the theme must still be the same. The true character of the servant of Christ is sacrificed for that of a preacher of speculations, novelties, personal fancies or hopes, and the power to affect souls is lost. All this seems very simple, and it is in fact only elementary truth, but it is truth which is continually forgotten. There are men who are continually seeking to discover what God has not revealed, and in their diligent study of the mysteries are neglecting the loving and eternal truths which ought to be the substance of their teaching. They fatigue themselves in useless attempts to explain what has only to be set forth as the divine message, and they are never weary of taking their hearers into the confidence of their own uncertainties or misgivings. They may be ingenious, clever, brilliant, but they are not powerful ministers of the New Testament. Yet men are excited by them. They are said to be interesting, as they are certainly startling; and those who are carried away by the originality of their thinking, or the eloquence of their periods, do not stop to inquire whether they have really been listening to a message of Divine Love from Heaven, or whether, in fact, the pulpit has not wholly changed its character and been converted into the rostrum of a religious lecture-room, or the stage of a religious theatre, on which are periodically given performances for the moral or religious good of the audience.

The press has always regarded the pulpit with a certain amount of jealousy, and it may be admitted that it is not altogether unnatural or even unreasonable. But, to say the least, it is carried to excess, and ought to be corrected by an

intelligent and discriminating view of the difference between their respective spheres and functions. Taking the press in its broadest sense, and regarding the distinction between the two agencies as that between spoken and written thought, it may be assumed that they represent two entirely different kinds of influences. A preacher may combine both—he may move great congregations by his sermons as delivered, or he may affect them by his printed volumes. But this twofold success is secured by the exercise of two different classes of faculties. The discourses which produce the most abiding impression on the reader are not for the most part those which have been most effective when delivered. The true preacher is abundantly conscious of this, and probably will make changes in the sermon as spoken, which will adapt it to the uses of the study and the sickroom. Too well he knows how impossible it is for him to reproduce some of the qualities which have made the sermon most effective—the light touches of pathos or even of humour, the words of gracious sympathy, the tender appeals which have been quite unpremeditated, and which, had they been, would have lost most of their charm and power. From personal experience, I should say that the most telling (in the truest and deepest sense of the word) parts of a sermon are those which are intuitions—what I heard Hugh M'Neile once describe as "sparks struck off from a blacksmith's apron." These have a vitality and point, and produce an impression which cannot be revived by the same sentences read, without any of the accessories, on the printed page. There is really no place for rivalry between pulpit and press. They use entirely different weapons, and practically their work admits of no comparison.

But taking the press in its more restricted signification as applying to journalism, there is, if possible, even less room for hostility. It is not difficult to understand, indeed, that

the press should chafe under the authority which is often claimed by and for the pulpit. But the claim is unwarranted, and is never urged by those who have a true conception of the preacher's office. On a great number of subjects, and those with which the press is chiefly conversant, he has no particular claim to speak at all. There are men, indeed, and among them are some journalists, who are continually calling on ministers of the gospel for deliverances on some of the burning questions of the time. The requirement is unreasonable, but it shows in itself an utter misconception of the sphere in which the minister of Christ claims to speak with any measure of authority. If this were more clearly defined, and the limitations strictly preserved, there would be less rivalry and less clashing.

It may be worth while to try and mark out the boundaries of the two territories over which pulpit and press respectively exercise jurisdiction. We have recently been discussing the question of foreign policy, especially as regards Crete, Turkey, Greece, and the European Concert. A journalist looks at them with the eye of one who has access to special intelligence, and who is assumed to have a special aptitude for interpreting its full significance. The preacher, on the other hand, makes no such professions, and therefore when he speaks on details of policy is dealing with problems for the solution of which he has no peculiar aptitude. But in laying down the broad principles on which all these questions are to be determined, in expounding the great law of righteousness as applied to nations as well as individuals, in urging his hearers to trust in God and use all their influence as citizens to promote a policy of right, he is doing the work to which he is called.

Whether the journalist can be an effective critic of the preacher is a question to which different answers may be given. If the sphere of the pulpit is to be extended after the fashion which finds favour in some quarters, and is to be

occupied with the discussion of the "burning question" of the day, then of course its utterances will have to be subject to the same kind of treatment which is accorded to all public deliverances. The pulpit loses its distinctive character when the preacher undertakes to discuss vexed points on political, social, or ecclesiastical controversy, and so converts his pulpit into a platform. The expediency of such a course is open to very grave doubt, which our observation of the movements in this direction does not help to modify or abate. There do come from time to time great crises in national affairs when the Christian minister may speak with great advantage; but the less frequent this intervention, and the more careful he is in the selection of his opportunities, the more likely is he to be effective. But the inevitable tendency is to make these utterances more frequent; and my own strong conviction is that it is one which is full of peril, and ought to be resisted at all costs. For, I venture to repeat, the preacher has his message to deliver, and his first care should be that it neither be neglected nor prejudiced by the intrusion of other matters not directly related to it. The extent to which the special work of the pulpit itself may be hindered by the introduction of topics which are ungrateful to the hearer, and which do not in the remotest degree touch his spiritual well-being, it is impossible to determine; and whatever may be said in favour of this wider view of the sphere of the pulpit, it remains true that these do not belong to the special business of the preacher, and that in all probability he has no particular competence for handling them.

The example of the old prophet is often urged as a justification for this wider view of the preacher's office with which we are dealing. But the analogy is too incomplete to justify such a conclusion. There need be no objection to men who are competent for it following in the steps of the

old prophet. To rebuke unrighteousness in public as well as in private affairs, to bring all issues connected with national and social life to the test of God's truth, to treat all great public questions on the basis of Christian principle, is certainly a high function of a minister of Christ. He is to be a preacher of national righteousness in every sphere of human life. But he has so many other platforms on which he can make his voice heard on these and other questions, that the expediency of using the pulpit, save on very rare and exceptional occasions, for this purpose is, to say the least, very questionable.

There are, too, very obvious objections which may be noted. The almost certain result of such a course of action must be to stamp a partisan character upon congregations. Numbers go to the sanctuary with a desire for spiritual refreshment and help. They are weary of the world, its disappointments, its vexations, its hollowness. They want spiritual quickening and help; and if they are treated to discussions on the claims of the democracy or Christian Socialism, or perhaps even some one of the questions which have been occupying the public mind during the week, they go away disappointed, possibly in a state of semi-irritation, probably with a half-formed determination to seek a different kind of ministry in the future. Of course there must be diversities in congregations, and the result of the divergence may only be the creation of a fresh variety. But it would scarcely be a desirable addition to existing diversities. For if it were to be accepted, there would be sure to come the second evil, which would be an antagonism of Churches—probably even of the same order—on purely political grounds.

It would be worse than folly to try and limit the freedom of the pulpit. But to return to the point from which this digression started, it must be admitted that the more the preacher confines himself to the grand aim of his ministry,

the less room is there for rivalry between him and the journalist. So far as the latter is concerned, he may, on the one hand, keenly resent the intrusion of the preacher into what he regards as his own peculium, and in all probability will do so if the position which he takes is hostile to his own. With treatment of this sort we are all familiar, and it is the very last kind of suggestion which would be likely to influence an honest, independent, and courageous man. It is essential to the right discharge of ministerial duty that a man should sometimes defy the censure of public opinion in support of what he believes to be right. But it is quite as necessary on the other side that he should be on his guard against the seductive influence of the praise which commends action, the wisdom of which, at all events, may be doubtful. It is but few journalists, indeed, who are competent judges of the preacher. They may be perfectly competent both from their intellectual and moral qualifications to judge of the literary character of his sermon. They may even be well fitted to pronounce on its theological correctness—they certainly can often present the most vivid sketch of its style and delivery, and even to form a just estimate of the immediate effect of the sermon. It is not to be denied that these are all matters of importance, and the preachers will be wise to take heed to any valuable suggestions which may be made in the course of these comments. There is no man who more needs wise and yet kindly criticism, and no man who is less likely to get it. If a newspaper supplies it, the newspaper is doing him a real service, by which he should seek to profit. But such instruction needs to be received with care. The purely newspaper test of success is not that by which a true minister of Christ will be content to judge his work.

To-day the newspaper is at work everywhere, and I am one of those who believe that the publicity which it gives and the interest which it awakens in preachers and their

work is, on the whole, decidedly good. But it would be a melancholy thing if, in a desire to be boomed by a newspaper, a preacher was to forget his own special and distinctive mission.

That mission is to lead human souls to God. A failure to accomplish that would be simply spiritual disaster. He might even do other good work in the Church and in the world, work not to be underrated, much less despised. But the special service which he is called upon to render to God is to win souls, and if he fail in that, he has lost his true crown. That work has its own peculiar difficulties. There are those who suggest that, though in the early days of the Church it was necessary that Paul should make the preaching of the message and the pleading with the souls of men his special business, the necessity for this in a country saturated with Christian ideas, and to congregations who have been trained in the midst of them, is not so obvious. The argument is very crude and inconclusive. We have certainly to deal with difficulties of a different kind. But it is doubtful whether they are really less serious. Knowledge is not always accompanied by faith. Familiarity with the gospel does not always imply a sympathy with its aims, or a ready susceptibility to its appeals. A careful survey of a modern congregation certainly would not suggest the idea to a devout Christian preacher that the need for careful exposition and earnest appeal did not exist. Take, for example, its young people. It is true that they have been nurtured in Christian traditions, instructed in Christian truths, probably even have a certain sympathy with Christian aims. But they are acted on by a thousand and one influences of an entirely different character. There was a time when the pulpit, if not the sole instructor, had comparatively few competitors for influence over congregations. Literature, at all events, was an extremely insignificant, almost unknown, factor. Among the many changes which

have marked the Victorian era, few are more important than that which has taken place in this respect. We have been living in a time of intellectual development, so continuous and so extensive, that it amounts to little short of a revolution. The daily penny newspaper and the electric telegraph, which has made it so vivid a representation of the world's life; the cheap issues of classic books, which have brought the choicest works of literature within the reach of the humblest readers; the railway bookstall, a survey of which itself has so appetising an effect on the mind that it even has a certain educational value, are among the influences which have been at work to change the mental habits of large sections of the community. It is only necessary to try to imagine ourselves without these ordinary accessories of modern civilisation, in order to get some idea of the change which their introduction has wrought. There is no desire to exaggerate their real value. It may be that very much of the knowledge which is thus obtained is superficial, and not of a high order even of that. A mind which feeds itself on the scraps which are so popular will certainly not acquire any real force nor much knowledge of any particular subject. But, at all events, the diffusion even of snippety literature of this kind is a sign of the times, and is not without its effect. After all possible discount has been made, it is not to be denied that the number of readers has enormously increased in this generation. It is not too much to say that this age realises the description of the old prophet, "Many run to and fro, and knowledge is increased."

It is no comfort to a preacher who has to deal with this state of things, to be told that the mental furniture of a large section—indeed of the great majority—of readers is extremely imperfect. As a general rule, the less a man knows the more dogmatic is he about everything. The class with whom the preacher finds it most difficult to deal

is the quarter-educated, who have not learned enough to perceive the depths of their ignorance, and who are able to chatter about all things in heaven and in earth in unconsciousness—happy so far as they themselves are concerned, but very provoking to their hearers—that at every point they are only showing how much they need that some one should teach them the very alphabet of knowledge. The increase in the numbers of this class cannot well be exaggerated, and it is not to be doubted that it is at once a difficulty and a danger. Occasionally we hear one of them declaiming probably on a political platform, and it is curious to observe the facility with which he can dispose of problems that have exercised some of the keenest intellects the world has ever produced, who have been forced to dismiss them unsolved—the dogmatism with which he can pronounce on questions which most sharply divide the world, the quiet assurance with which he can set up his own authority as though it were conclusive. He is provoking and yet instructive, for, after all, he is a superior example of a type of mind which is very common, and with which the preacher has continually to deal. Young people, possibly well trained in their early days, are liable to be affected, not so much by men of this order but by the influences which have formed them and made them what they are. They, too, are likely to catch the same conceit of their own wisdom, the same foolish notion that those who do not accept all the new ideas thereby give proof of their own intellectual inferiority, the same supercilious contempt for the past, the same surprising assurance that whatever is new must on that account alone be absolutely true, at all events until it is superseded by something that is newer still.

It does not need any keen insight to perceive how difficult and yet how necessary the work of the preacher must be under such conditions. His gospel cannot have

the surpassing charm of freshness with which the message of the apostles must have come to men to whom the idea of a loving Father in Heaven, who sent His own Son into the world to die for the sins of men, had all the surprise and marvel of a revelation. It is an oft-told tale, which, alas! the hearers of whom I speak are disposed to treat with cynical indifference, perhaps with sceptical disbelief. Through the week their minds have been detained among an entirely different set of subjects. Their reading may probably have inclined them to treat the spiritual world and all belonging to it as a mere illusion. Day by day they are reading or hearing that the march of thought is leading men away from the gospel of Christ, that the most intelligent preachers, in the hope of keeping in touch with the *Zeitgeist*, are quietly putting aside the ideas on which their fathers most relied, and that those who still cling to them are either too old to learn, and therefore to be pitied as venerable relics of a bygone dispensation, or too cowardly to break loose from established tradition, and therefore to be despised. The man who would meet and counteract this needs, indeed, to be a strong man. Let him beware, however, how he tampers with it, and seeks to meet it by concessions for peace' sake. The appetite for concession is certainly one which grows by what it feeds upon. It is for the servant of truth to preach what he believes to be truth, whether men bear or whether they will forbear. Concession is a word that can have no proper place in his vocabulary, and if it be once introduced the only result must be the weakening of his influence. If new light has broken in upon his soul, he must give his congregation the benefit of it. But this is not a concession to their tastes, or an act of homage to the fashion of the times. It is an act of simple loyalty to conscience and truth—a ministering to others of that which the Spirit of God has first taught him. In this will be found his true power. The only man, it may be

confidently said, who can really influence a restless generation, such as I have described, is one who makes it feel that he speaks only what he believes, and because, so believing, he must speak.

Where writers, and especially the writers of fiction, have so large a constituency, the religious tendencies of the literature which is so popular must be a matter of supreme interest and importance to the preacher. As a matter of fact, the novels of the day are so largely talked about, and, perhaps, even so widely read (though it by no means follows that everybody who talks about them, and even criticises, has read them) by members of congregations, that the preacher is almost compelled to take into account the influence which they are likely to exert. It is not suggested that he ought to make them the topic of his sermons, and deal directly with what he regards as the mistaken ideas which they are propagating. It may be necessary occasionally to do even this. But it is a kind of work which needs extreme delicacy and judgment. It is rather as an element in determining the character of his own teaching that the presence and power of this literary force has to be taken into account. The books which have obtained a "record" circulation, which are found lying about on drawing-room tables, which are eagerly discussed in social circles, which are continually boomed in newspapers of accepted authority, and which, in fact, occupy a good deal of thought and attention during the week, cannot safely be ignored by Christian teachers.

Half a century ago these books would have been placed under a strict boycot. But in the present generation we have changed all that. Our grandfathers prohibited the reading of Scott or Fenimore Cooper. To-day even Sarah Grand is tolerated. It is only one of the many examples of the swing of the pendulum. But it is a matter of vital

moment, and needs careful consideration. Some years ago a distinguished lawyer of the Baptist persuasion gave me an account of a conversation between himself and a lady of society, whom he happened to take down to dinner. Her first question to him was, "Have you seen such a play?"—naming the popular play of the hour. "Never go to the theatre," was the reply. "Dear me!" was the exclamation of surprise. But the answer to the next question caused her still greater astonishment. "Have you read ———"? naming the popular novel. "I do not read novels," was the amazing response. Possibly the lady may have thought it all explained when the next piece of information communicated was that he never went to church. When this was followed by the statement, in answer to other queries, that he did go to chapel, and that some of his favourite reading was Milton's prose works, the state of mind to which the lady was reduced may be safely left to the reader's imagination. Whether the lady thought that her neighbour was an escaped lunatic, or an antiquated fossil, may be a matter of question. I know him to be a man of keen intelligence, as well as high character. He is a strong type of Puritanism as it was in its best forms. It is possible that it might be for the benefit of English Nonconformity if it had retained more of this spirit. The extreme severity might have been modified with advantage. But the unrestrained latitude which is at present enjoyed is, to say the least, of more than doubtful benefit.

At all events, no preacher can safely forget that the fiction of the day helps to produce an intellectual and moral atmosphere, which its readers are breathing for six days in the week. To say the least, it is not conducive to robustness of religious conviction or depth of spiritual feeling. There is in it a widespread and resolute determination to ignore the restraints of religion. They are included under the general name of Puritanism, and to the writers in

question Puritanism is a thing abhorred. Then there are the eternal discussions of what is euphemistically called the sex problem, which in their ultimate result undermine the very foundations of morality itself. It is quietly assumed that considerations of art must override all others, and, in fact, that any endeavour to modify its realism is to be regarded as a proof of Philistine stupidity. The pulpit, which has to deal with minds saturated with ideas that are thus borrowed from popular literature, and disseminated widely by a certain section of the press, has no easy task.

Two features in particular demand his most thoughtful attention if he is to supply the necessary corrective. The first is the lawlessness, which is defiant not only of precedent or conventionalism, but of all authority, human or divine. The second, which is like unto it, and, in fact, is only its legitimate development, is godlessness. Happily, there are modern novels of a different spirit, and the popularity which they have achieved is the best evidence that numbers have felt the need of something different from the books which had for some time been the fashion. But the press still pours forth a number of publications, the general tendency of which is towards a thinly-disguised paganism. It certainly cannot be combated by mere sensational expedients, and still less by unwarranted compromises. The man who is to effect it must be one who makes his hearers feel the reality of his manhood, the breadth of his sympathy, the firmness of his intellectual grasp of the problems of the hour, the depth and intensity of his convictions, the enthusiasm of his loyalty for Christ, and the fervour of his desire for the salvation of the souls of men. The qualities essential to his success are very different, but they are not antagonistic. It is possible to preserve a due respect for the old, and yet to be free from that hard Conservatism which will listen to no charmer charming never so wisely, if in his music there be any fresh note. The most devoted service of

the truth does not necessarily mean a hard judgment even of those who stumble through unbelief; nor is a high spirituality of thought and aim at all inconsistent with a sympathetic recognition of the work which the man of the world has to do in the sphere of daily life. In a word, largeness of heart may exist where there is an eagle's keenness of vision and a lion's strength of limb. This is the ideal which the preacher must keep before himself.

In conclusion, it may truly be said that the very difficulty of his task should only make the work of the preacher of to-day more attractive to a man fired with unselfish spiritual ambition. There is no more foolish talk than that of those who represent it as a spent force. The wish is father to the thought. But its futility is shown by the eager appeals which are continually made to the preacher to throw the weight of his influence into some popular movement, and the bitter complaints which are made by those who do not secure this assistance. The preacher himself is the only man who can destroy his own power. If he be a mere slave of precedent, seeking to form himself upon some model of past times, without regard to his own capabilities or the necessities of the age; if he dwell in a cloister, and is disposed to glory in his isolation; if he mumble out old formulas, instead of speaking living and loving words, it is certain that men will not be greatly moved by him. Or if, on the other hand, he seeks to tickle the ears of men instead of moving their hearts; if he trembles before the prejudice he ought to defy, and tries to conciliate by compromise the error he ought to oppose to the death; or if he parades before men his doubts and difficulties, instead of the certainties of his faith, there can be but one issue. He may obtain momentary popularity, but of spiritual and enduring success he can have no hope. No strength of resolution, on the one hand, can be too

forcible, no wealth of tenderness too rich, as a qualification for him who has to grapple with the spirit of the times, as seen alike in its literature, its science, and its politics. That spirit is distinctly anti-Christian; it is, as we have seen, ready to scoff at moral restraints, and fancies that it has passed a sufficiently condemnatory verdict upon them when it describes them as Puritan. The contempt thus poured upon one of the noblest names both in our religious and civil history is itself one of the most significant and painful indications of tendencies that are at work amongst us; and that must have their effect upon the youthful mind. The minister of Christ, who has to commend the gospel to men affected by the literary, the scientific, and, last but not least, the social temper of the age, certainly cannot afford to regard his special work with indifference. His opportunities are few, and it is for him diligently to improve them. It is a small matter to him whether he attract public attention. He may well be content to remain, if need be, in obscurity, provided only that at the close he be amongst those who, having turned many to righteousness, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament and as the stars for ever and ever.

APPENDIX

THE WITNESS TO THE SPIRIT

(A FRAGMENT)

By HENRY ROBERT REYNOLDS

The plan of this book originally included an Essay upon the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, as set forth in Scripture and verified in human experience. The topic was entrusted to the Rev. Henry Robert Reynolds, D.D., Principal of Cheshunt College, who entered upon his task with much readiness and delight. It is matter for lasting regret that he lived to accomplish only a small part of his scheme; but the section here given, complete in itself, is so characteristic of Dr. Reynolds' thought and style, and so full of interest, that it has been determined not to withhold it. The paper has been inserted by kind permission of the author's surviving representatives.

Further discussion of the doctrine, in others of its varied aspects, will be found in the First Essay, the plan of which was modified in consequence of Dr. Reynolds' decease.

APPENDIX

The Witness to the Spirit

My theme is not confined to the theological doctrine of the witness of the Holy Spirit with our spirits that we are the children of God (Rom. viii. 16); yet that very remarkable phrase covers and names one of the root facts of our spiritual history, apart from which we should not know whether there be any Holy Spirit. The widely spread disinclination to concede the idea of the so-called "personality" of the Holy Spirit, as distinct from that of "the Father" or "the Son," turns on the possible discrimination or otherwise we can make between these two testimonies. Can we, or can we not, discern any difference between the witness of our reason and affections that the Eternal God is our Father and that we are His children, and the supernatural testimony borne in the depths of our own conscience to the same surprising fact, by God Himself, and God known to us as distinct from "the Father" or "the Son" (or "the Logos"), and yet separable in thought from the fundamental idea of "God"? Many answer this question with a reverent negative, and are content with a pious agnosticism in dealing with such mystic realities. Others, by long habituation with the formula of theology touching the Holy Trinity, can, or at least do answer the question with strong affirmatives of entire confidence, and even do more, discriminate the personal convictions of our own conscious ego, from the gentle ministry of the Spirit of Christ, and also from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of the Father and of the Son.

Some are content to do without any doctrine or teaching concerning the Spirit, using perhaps all these familiar terms —Father, Spirit, Son, Lord, Grace, as virtually equivalent or equipollent in meaning. They leave, moreover, to the theologians to draw their distinctions, which connote differences imperceptible to the practical mind. Grave charges must be brought against any theological system which must go back sixteen hundred years to find philosophical terms to use for these transcendent themes, and cannot find all that is necessary in the deliverance of consciousness, or at least in the testimonies of the Lord, of the prophetic word, and of the current teaching of the apostles. Whatever Christian doctrine we examine, whether it has to do with God or man, with the nature or the redemption of man, with the Word, or the Church, or the Sacraments of the divine life, we seem led by irresistible mental processes, to the idea of "the Spirit," "the Spirit of God," "the Holy Spirit." In fact, the most fundamental idea of God, given in consciousness and preserved in the most venerable fragments of religious speculation, is that God's own essential nature is "Spirit," as antithetic to matter or to chaos, or to body, or to things without life. Our own *ego* contrasts itself sharply with all that is *not ego*; and that utterly irreducible element in which our consciousness abides, discriminates itself from all beside. The infinite non-ego, including even our own bodies—which are not ourselves—divides itself, as we do divide ourselves, into *Spirit*, and any or all of its great antitheses. This is the most essential analogue and measure of the Deity. What we call Spirit thinks; persists through all its own states, and is more than they; operates in all its parts; pervades all that is not conscious self; is the order, force, purpose, meaning of the whole. The beginning of inquiries into the nature of God, whether in uncultivated heathenism, in Indian or Hellenic thought, supposes the underlying energy that

pervades nature to be akin to that which thinks, feels, acts in the worshipper. From the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation, "the Spirit" is the most characteristic expression for the Almighty, in His great acts, His omnipresence in the universe, His accessibility to man, His special working in souls, in conscience, and in the providential government of the world. The idea of "Father" or "Son," of "Lord" or of "King" are later differentiations of the stupendous and more simple conception of the Spirit. In some frames of mind we seem to need nothing more than this presence and power deeply interfused, this "motion and Spirit" which fills eternity and thrills through all things, and works in us, and is the life of our life and "the light of all our seeing," the Person with whom we have to do, to whom, so far as we are free creatures, we are responsible for every act and habitude. Many want no more, are satisfied with the simple creed that "God is (a) Spirit," and suppose by avoiding such terms as "Father," "Son," they escape from the *bête noire* of anthropomorphism. They are not, however, emancipated so easily, for the word "Spirit" is perhaps the most perfect anthropopatheia possible. It would seem as though, say what we will, we are so made that we cannot but think of the supreme Presence, which the Fetishist and Henotheist, the Hylotheist or Christian philosopher, dreams of as akin to that which is within us, which wills and thinks, spirit rather than body, spirit rather than matter, spirit rather than "things *per se*." If we allow ourselves a step further, and dare for our own solace to name the character or functions of the Spirit, and assign the most comprehensive term to His relations with us, the highest minds of our ancestors, as well as some of the most vigorous, have called Him "Father." This has been done by those who meant by it our "Creator," or the Governor of the Universe—"the Father of Gods and Men"—but in the highest revelations, or even call them "speculations" of our race, the Great Spirit

has been hailed as "the Father in Heaven," one who has actually assumed towards us parental functions, who has given us His own spiritual nature, who has breathed it into us, and thus made us what we are, "children of God," with all corresponding relations and obligations. But the thought of a Father has led to the sublime conception of one who is a Father *per se*, who has always been throughout finite time, the Father of spirits like His own, the Giver and the Lover of natures like His own. If *always*, then He has been so "in the beginning," from before all time; and His Eternal Nature as Father looms upon us out of the very depth of the Eternal Spirit, as generating the perfect image and perfect likeness of Himself, with whom all subsequent creatures share a common life. The idea of "the Father and the Son" posits an eternal relation, the infinite Subject and Object, both of thought and love; we see without effort the Son in the bosom of the Father, the archetypal Child of the Eternal, in whom all other life consists, as eternal as eternity.

And thus, "the Spirit of God" being the primal conception of Deity, the mind has flowed on to the twofold conception of "Father" and "Son," as the very basis of all rational and moral relations with spirits that have been breathed into Being from Himself and after His likeness.

In like manner, the idea of the Spirit as God (θεός) in the process of emergence from the one to the many—from the Eternal Silence and Stillness to the Universe, the "all things" (πάντα)—including not merely "spirit," but κόσμος, "world," and ζωή, "life"—had shadowed itself forth as the eternal relation between (θεός and λόγος) "God" and "The Word." Eternal Thought and eternal Word have been or been felt to be inseparable. As in the case of Father and Son, this is only another name of the same eternal relation, when we are helped by great and well-known sentences to grapple with some of the most fascinating problems ever presented to human minds, and even to concede that

"the Word was" not only "with God," but "God" Himself, that "all things came into being through Him," that in Him was "Life" and "Light."

Is it not, however, possible to move one step nearer to the central mystery, as early and later thinkers have done, when they have endeavoured to name more closely the relation of the Spirit to the Father and to the Son? The Apostle Paul taught the Corinthians "Who of men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? In the same manner also no one hath known the things of God, save the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. ii. 11). The Spirit of God is then the self-consciousness of God. This term connotes the self-consciousness of the Father, and also the self-consciousness of the Son; and the whole analogy of nature shows us that these two are one. The Eternal Spirit is the unity of the Father and of the Son, the unity of the Godhead, the thinking, loving, central reality of the stupendous conception of Him with whom we have to do.

In the Old Testament, in the sublime record of the dealing of God with man, this great concept transcends in operation even the more familiar "Jahveh" or "Lord of Hosts." He is represented as brooding over the formless void, and causing it to teem with life; as the Creator of all things; as the efficient cause of the difference between the life in man and in all other creatures; as striving with man when in his waywardness he pursues his self-centred and sinful life; as working in the hearts of men to give to them special faculties, the sense of beauty, the skill to express it, the craft to give utterance to the throes of genius; He is the source of all the higher feats and great achievements of the understanding, the joy of the world, the subconscious leader of His people, the wisdom to guide them and strength to rule them. The whole underlying wonder of persistent force, which constitutes the reality of all things, is the indwelling and abiding and native Spirit of God. We reach

the very limit of our faculty if we try to think out for ourselves, what we are taught by science to believe is the behaviour of a solitary atom. Still more baffling does it become, if we stretch our imagination to conceive the great masses of matter, and the world of space; still further, to apprehend the mysterious wonder of the life cells of plant and animal, the balance between their respective kingdoms, and constant operation upon every point of the created universe; of the physical forces in their ceaseless correlation and inexhaustible fulness and conspiracy of all together to evolve a harmony and charm of co-operation and progress, which embraces every element of wonder and splendour, and calls for every emotion of adoration and praise. Nothing less than God can accomplish any of these physical effects. His thought and purpose are required at every atomic centre of energy throughout the universe, for every infinitesimal fraction of time. Thus we reach the concept of the Great Spirit, not as a delegated angel of the Eternal Presence, but as the living, loving God Himself. The complicated rhythm of the infinite fulness of activity in which we and all other things whatsoever live and move and have their being, becomes a revelation of the Spirit of the Lord God, the unity of the Father and the Son, the unity of God and the Word, the God of the spirits of all flesh, in the amplitude of whose embrace they all are living.

The greatness of this conception becomes more conspicuous in the preparation made by the Spirit of God to perfect the work of redemption and renewal, in bringing the Eternal Son into closer and final union with humanity. Great was the working of the Spirit with every soul of man. Marvellous were the special functions which the Spirit of sonship, the spirit of the Logos, wrought in the elect souls of the race. Measureless was the augmentation of the faith of Abraham, the courage, the insight, the prophetic energy of Moses, the royal powers and poetry of David, the vision of Isaiah,

the sublime poetry of Job, and the profound practical wisdom of the Proverbs, the throbbing sense of the nearness of God to Humanity as conceived by the Baptist. Nay, may we not attribute to the same divine source, the intensity of the conscience of Socrates, the self-mastery and enlightenment of Buddha, the realisation of divine realities of justice and purity in the wisdom of Confucius and Lao-tse, in the Vedic songs and the poems of Pentaur, with the snatches of heavenly wisdom in the Orphic fragments? In every case there was a coming together of man and God, of untold value to mankind. It was in these cases capable of being put into precious words which have lived and will never die; but the supreme contact between God and man, the actual doing of the Eternal will from the ground of human nature, was not yet. Not until the Great Spirit Worker prepared a body and soul of such consummate perfection, that, though the brother of the most needy, He proved to be Lord of all, did the Eternal Son come into living, actual union with Him. The Incarnation of the Word and Son of God, in the life and death of Him who was in His own recorded self-consciousness both "Son of God" and "Son of Man," wrought such a unity, that the lightest things of human life were not beneath His notice, nor the basest and most wretched corruptions of human nature below His pity and redeeming might; while He was at the same time always conscious of eternity, coming from heaven, revealing the Father, absolutely doing His will; answering, down to the depth of the humanity He assumed, the good pleasure of the Eternal. The relation of His human life to the divine was a kind to which we have been led by all the inworking of the Spirit of the living God, in the Cosmos, and in human life and teaching; but the kind has transcended every previous and later example of such mutual indwelling of God and man. He who is the Unity of the Father and the Son is the veritable union and unity of the Son of God and

Son of Man. The Eternal Spirit of the Lord, the Holy Spirit for ever in God, and dwelling in the Son of Man without measure, and also working in our poor troubled flesh, is from the hour of the glorification of the Son of Man, presenting to men all the truth, all "the things" of the Lord Jesus. The measure of His capacity to bless and rectify and perfect the soul has always been conditioned by the affluence of the material at His disposal. Formerly He took the mystery of the kingdom of God and brought it to bear upon human life and destiny; now He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto His own. He searcheth the deep things of God, and man becomes under this divine tutelage and indwelling one with God, able to think His thoughts, to accept His discipline, and to cry from the depth of his consciousness, "Thy will be done."

I am not concerned to discriminate too closely the high functions of the Spirit; but so far as we are concerned, the Spirit of the Christ—the underlying consciousness of the God-man—is that which manifests the highest conceivable operation of the Holy Spirit upon us and within us. The Apostle John tells us that notwithstanding all previous activities of the Spirit in nature and humanity, as recorded by Himself and the sacred writers in general, "the Holy Spirit was not yet (given), because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John vii. 39). The previous activities, however splendid and abundant in their fulness, were incommensurable with the glory of His work, when, as the Union of God and Man, He began to change our poor damaged nature into the nature of the glorified Jesus, from glory to glory; to dwell in us, to abide in our poor life, to hallow and cleanse it down to its roots, to think through us, so that our thoughts and His thoughts are veritably blended, so that our desires are His purposes, our characteristic and personal functions become the glorious intentions of His divine personality. We are temples of the Holy Spirit, we are creatures of His might; we are

certainly endowed with new and most overwhelming responsibilities, for we can resist His ministry, we can choke and silence the inner voice, we can quench the Holy Spirit, either in ourselves or others, we can crucify the Lord Christ who is dwelling by His Spirit within us, we can reject, betray, deny, insult, and put to open shame our "gentle, awful Holy Guest," and we need every moment of our inner life, to pray in the Spirit, to walk in the Spirit, to war with the flesh in the power of the Spirit, and to live in such conscious union with the Lord that we gain the victory and fully realise the Life Eternal.

But these great results need further contemplation and deeper analysis. In proportion as we realise the double life within us, we can bear our testimony to the reality of the Holy Ghost, and "His witness with our spirits that we are the children of God."

Before proceeding to this, we must put ourselves upon our guard. It would be presumption to suppose that all the operations of the Spirit are by any means present to our consciousness. How much He has wrought in us, "before our infant hearts conceived from whom those blessings flowed"! Infinitely numerous are the ways in which the Holy One prepares us for full interpretation of Himself before, independently of, within and beneath our consciousness! We are prepared for this by the reflection that we have only as yet, with all the dazzling disclosures of modern science, done no more than give names to certain methods of nature, or rather of God in it, which had been hid from the ages and generations that preceded us. We do not know now, nor can we even think what is gravitation, or heat, or light; or what are electric states and activities, or magnetic mysteries. They have been going on during all the history of the cosmos, and new facts of the same kind have been looming out of the mists of darkness, and continue to do so;

but we recognise, as soon as we are told of these things, that the Spirit, the Will, the Power and Wisdom of the Supreme Being has been acting along these lines before the foundation of this world. We are getting to "think His thoughts after Him," as Kepler put it, but it is only the whisper of a word that we catch. The forms—the fundamental forces or methods of the One Great Spirit's action—are in all probability but the veriest alphabet of what is still to be observed. Some new discoveries as wonderful as that of Gravitation, or Evolution, or the recent disclosure of the penetrating powers of light, await the immediate future, which will modify all our previous knowledge, and throw a new glamour over the universe. In like manner, the Spirit of God has been working in human life, far below the consciousness, and has awaited some suitable moments for His self-revelation to men. Events as momentous to the spiritual progress of the race, as that of Sinai, or Bethlehem, or Calvary, or Olivet, or Pentecost—"Comings of our Lord" in power and great glory—await the world, which will transcend all the rest when they have come into consciousness and become part of human life. It is, then, with deepest reverence that we bear *our* faint whispers of testimony to the grace and working of the Holy Spirit within our consciousness, which tell us of timeless, constant operations upon us, which we cannot "name," and which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and which no heart has conceived.

This leads me to premise that the first testimony we can bear to the co-action of the Spirit with our spirits is the testimony borne to it by other spirits. The intelligent portion of the human family has from early times been accustomed to feel about some phenomena of nature into which the human will or personality enters; "This or that was not any human cleverness, or the simple mechanical contact of the human purpose with surrounding conditions

of physical nature. *This* or *that is the finger of God.* Here or there—in some undiscovered region of experience—is another Purpose, another Will-power infinitely transcending what we know of nature or man." The very power that "looses the bands of Orion," the skill that sculptures the ear, that adapts the eye to light, that opens the stomata on the back of every blade of grass, that provides food of plant, animal, bird, insect, and fish, that kindles the phosphorescence of the deep sea—all this strikes us aghast and dumb with wonder, and gives the special sense of the "Presence of God," reveals the will and purpose of the Almighty. There are certain workings of the minds of men which impress the witness of them with the sense of the infinite Power and Wisdom which is at the back of all consciousness. The laws of mind themselves show the transcendent operation of the Source and Spirit of all things, and are but phenomena of the will that established these very laws. To these we cannot but refer the great discoveries of the scientist, the visions of lofty genius, the combinations of art and science, by which an introduction is effected to the nameless, untellable glories of music, painting, sculpture. We cannot follow, by any of the laws of thought that we know, the mighty stride which a brother makes into the invisible realities; we do but approximate the mystery. We fall back upon the infinite One. We say this is the breath of the eternal activities of heart, mind, and will, that are more than human heart, mind, and will. We catch the notes of the almighty voice, of an infinite Wisdom, of the Eternal Love and Purpose.

So we trace in the operation of certain minds, more, even infinitely more, than those minds in the utmost tension could have produced. We discern certain minds travailing with comprehensive thoughts which are divine revelations, which lose themselves in the skirts of His garments, which are the Secrets of God Himself, hidden in their folds, the

drawing near of the Eternal One to His loved children. Thus the luminous thoughts of a few become the heritage of generations. Poetry and all true art of the highest kind, which are beyond the power of education or circumstance or analogy of nature to produce, do mediate the thoughts, wishes, and ideals of the Most High God upon us and the world.

We must not underestimate the extent of these revelations, these coming near to our consciousness, of what is of the nature of consciousness, but is not the human will, or the human spontaneity. Certain flashes of (what we call) genius have revolutionised the world. Certain forth-breathings of melody and harmony there are, leading the way into the region of the unnameable glories of reality and eternity. The chords and movements of sweet sounds convey what cannot be put into any human words, what cannot be expressed in any other methods known to us, what is more than and different from any known emotions. Fragments are they, snatches of a reality, which none of us have yet explored. Many things in our human life transcend our sense, our reason, our imagination, our emotions, and are yet "the master light of all our seeing." Science, music, art of every kind, rest upon invisible, intangible, unnameable realities of what is below our consciousness, and yet is probably the far larger part of our Ego; which, though transcending all our λόγος of every dimension or intensity, and never coming into consciousness, is yet never excluded from it. The finest moments, the grandest situations of history, give the nearest approximations to the articulate voice of the Almighty.

The voice, or seeming voice, which convinced the greatest teachers of our race of some of the positive characteristics—so far as we can think or feel them—of Him "who is and was, and is to come," who says, "I am what I am," who said, "My Father and your Father," "My Father, into Thy hands I

commend My spirit," "My grace is sufficient for thee"—this voice we call "revelation," and its confirmation comes in some answering echo from the depths of our consciousness. Throughout the whole history of the true Church of God, *i.e.* of elect souls, "the testimonies" which could take shape in consciousness have been augmented; and yet comparatively speaking they are few and Catholic. They are infinitely precious, and those who accept them as λόγος cast their plumb-line into fathomless abysses, and say, "Oh the depth; oh the depth."

This leads the brotherhood of the one fellowship into very blessed interchanges of common love and hope, and oneness in that which is Eternal. Still this testimony of the brotherhood of God's elect, of the fellows of the Son of God, vast, deep, and impressive as it is, does fall short of the testimony which we find within ourselves; for, apart from the true *inward* witness to the divine and infinite reality, the other voice, if voice it be, will be unheard.

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